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## Majali congratulates Kuwait on new cabinet

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday sent a cable to his Kuwaiti counterpart, Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah, congratulating him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian government on the formation of the new cabinet, according to Jordan Television. Dr. Majali wished the Kuwaiti people further progress and development (see story on page 2).

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
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## 'U.S. not ready for talks with Iraq' Ross visit should reflect a new American stand not intimidated by Israel — Anani

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani on Monday said that the U.S. administration has told His Majesty King Hussein that the time was not ripe for dialogue between the U.S. and Iraq.

Speaking to reporters at a press briefing, Dr. Anani said that during the King's four-day visit to Washington and his talks with U.S. officials, no timetable was discussed for the lifting of the seven-year-old sanctions imposed on Iraq.

"U.S. officials said that they need some time to decide whether to enter into a dialogue with Iraq but they believe that such time is tied to Iraq's implementation of the U.N. resolutions," Dr. Anani added.

"But they believe that Iraq is very actively cooperating with U.N. inspectors. So they have no problem at the moment [with Iraq]," the minister, who attended the King's talks with U.S. officials, said.

"When Iraq complies with U.N. resolutions, sanctions cannot remain for ever," Dr. Anani said.

The minister said that U.S. administration was fully aware of the Jordanian position "that once

Iraq fulfilled its commitment, sanctions become void."

On Thursday, the King met with U.S. President Bill Clinton and discussed with him the situation in Iraq and ways to revive peace talks in the Middle East. He also met with U.S. State and Defence Secretaries.

The deputy prime minister, who is also foreign minister, pointed that the agreement Iraq signed with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan should be the base for lifting the sanctions, imposed on Iraq following its seven-month-old occupation of Kuwait, in 1990.

"There was no specific time set in the agreement [to lift the sanction], he said." But Resolution 1154 which was based on the agreement signed by Mr. Annan and the Iraqi officials included in its text a light at the end of the tunnel," Dr. Anani added.

Asked about the upcoming visit of U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross, Dr. Anani said that he hoped the U.S. official would come up with serious proposals to the peace process.

"His visit should reflect a new American position not intimidated by Israeli" government," Dr. Anani said.

"We hope that the Americans will come up with serious and constructive proposals," the minister added.

Dr. Anani said that during the Washington's talks, the Jordanian side reflected what is on the mind of the Arab people who have doubts about the fairness of the U.S. role in the region.

The King made linkage "between the recent Gulf crisis and the peace process," Dr. Anani said.

He said that many U.S. officials were not comfortable with the position of the Israeli government towards the peace process and expressed belief that Israel wanted to escape its responsibilities, the minister added.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened that he will go over the U.S. President Bill Clinton directly to the American people in a bid to scuttle the U.S. peace plan which Israel opposes (see separate story).

Meanwhile, Jordan will "carefully study" an Arab League proposal to lift the U.N. sanctions imposed on Libya during the league's foreign ministers meeting in Cairo this week.

"Such a decision should be carefully studied," Dr. Anani said.

The minister emphasised that such a decision should be approved by Libya's neighbours because "it speaks about free movement and the passage through the air space of some countries."



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat shakes hands with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Gaza City on Monday. Mr. Annan, on the latest leg of a Middle East tour, is also due to meet with Israeli officials during his three-day visit (AFP photo)

## Annan urges Israel, PNA to accept U.S. proposal

GAZA CITY (AFP) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan urged Israel and the Palestinians on Monday to accept U.S. compromise proposals aimed at breaking the year-old stalemate in their peace negotiations.

Mr. Annan, on a regional tour to help breathe life back into the Middle East peace process, quickly added that his own ability as U.N. chief to help revive the negotiations was very limited.

"The United States is in the lead and is playing the role as mediator," Mr. Annan said after meeting here with Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat.

"I urge all parties to work with them and to have the flexibility to compromise so we can move forward and implement agreements already signed," he said in a prepared statement.

Mr. Arafat called on Mr. Annan to help make Israel respect U.N. resolutions calling for the full restitution of occupied territories, noting the U.N. leader's recent success in getting Iraq to bow to U.N. disarmament demands.

"Kofi Annan was able during his visit to Baghdad to stop a disaster. We hope he will be able here to push the Israelis to respect U.N. resolutions which they have been ignoring," he said.

"I will do my best," Mr. Annan replied.

"But one should be careful not to have exaggerated expectations of what the secretary general can achieve," he said. "A friend of mine called me a magician without tricks. You understand the limitations of a magician without tricks."

Nevertheless he vowed to remind Israeli leaders that "all Security Council resolutions are binding and I hope we will find ways to implement them."

Mr. Annan was scheduled to meet Tuesday with Mr. Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders.

## Lower House committee defers decision on press law

By Fakhour Abu Ghazaleh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Lower House of Parliament committee looking into the controversial Press and Publications Law on Monday indefinitely postponed its much-awaited decision on the fate of the legislation.

The House's nine-member national guidance committee was to decide whether to revoke the law and send it back to the government, or discuss its articles and then amend them in consultation with journalists and officials.

Five deputies, out of the present eight, decided to postpone the committee's decision for further discussion, one deputy said.

"This law is about public freedoms," committee member Mahmoud Kharabsheh told the Jordan Times on Monday. "Therefore, we must assess different views and use rationality to help us take the most appropriate decision that will serve the best interest of journalists, democracy, pluralism and the nation."

With five days remaining before the end of the House's current session, it is expected that the committee will only resume discussing the law when

the House reconvenes again in November or in the summer extraordinary session.

Mr. Kharabsheh said he favours "twisting the government's arm" by debating the law in the House and amending it, instead of sending it back to the government. He added that if the House revokes the law, the government will most probably send the same law back to the House — only with a different date.

"There are many loopholes in the law that need to be fixed," he said. "As a legislative authority, we have the right to omit or amend any article of this law, which obstructs freedom of expression and freedom of press."

However, the House's deliberations over the press law remain a questionable matter for many, who believe that Parliament should not even consider the law after the High Court of Justice annulled it on Jan. 26.

"From the Constitution's standpoint, this law does not exist anymore," lawyer Hanna Nidheet told the Jordan Times.

He said the government should retrieve the law, because it is non-existent anymore, and should then

reinstate a new press law either in its current format or in a new one.

"Parliament should refrain from discussing the provisional press law, which was ruled unconstitutional," Najeeb Rashdan, head of the Amman chapter of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, said in a recent seminar.

Mr. Rashdan, who is also a former Court of Cassation chief, added that since the High Court ruled that the amended law was issued in violation of the Constitution, it was not fit for discussion under Parliament's dome.

The country's highest administrative court revoked the tough government amendments to the 1993 press law introduced in May while Parliament was in recess, saying that the introduction of the temporary law was unconstitutional since there was no state of emergency or necessitating circumstances for the government to change the previous law.

The amended law forced 13 of Jordan's 20 weeklies to close down by tightening curbs on reporting, imposing stiffer fines on offenders and introducing prohibitive capital requirements.

## Iraq creates panel to find missing persons

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi parliament decided Monday to create a committee to look into the cases of Iraqis who disappeared in the 1991 Gulf war, the official INA news agency reported.

The committee will be charged with "looking for Iraqis who disappeared during the Mother of All Battles," said the agency, using official Iraqi terminology for the Gulf war.

The meeting comes five days after an Iraqi-Kuwaiti panel on the missing from the Gulf war held a meeting in the Gulf port city of Umm Qasr under the auspices of the International

Committee of the Red Cross. The committee groups representatives from Iraq, Kuwait, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Kuwait accuses Iraq of holding 600 Kuwaiti and other nationals in its prisons, and has called for the United Nations to send a commission of inquiry to inspect Iraqi jails. Baghdad admits having taken prisoners during its August 1990-February 1991 occupation of the emirate, but insists it lost track of them during an uprising which followed the war.

Iraq says the issue is being exploited for political ends.

## Cyprus to renounce missiles if settlement is achieved

NICOSIA (AFP) — Cyprus reiterated Monday that it is ready to call off the deployment of missiles ordered from Russia if there is a comprehensive settlement to the division of this eastern Mediterranean island.

"The government will cancel or suspend the deployment of the missile system only if substantive steps for de-militarisation are made or if there is sufficient progress toward an overall settlement of the Cyprus problem," a government spokesman was quoted

by the official CNA news agency as saying.

The Cypriot government statement came two days after a visit here by U.N. special envoy Diego Cordovez failed to relaunch intercommunal talks.

Mr. Cordovez said Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash continued to refuse to hold further U.N.-sponsored peace talks unless his breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is recognised.

(Continued on page 7)

## Government accepts Sharon's 'clarifications'

By Alia A. Toukan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has accepted a top Israeli official's "clarifications" made in a letter to Crown Prince Hassan, following his recent statement that the Jewish state still intends to eliminate a Jordanian Hamas leader after last fall, a senior Cabinet official said Monday.

"As long as the Israeli Minister of Infrastructure [Ariel Sharon] says that his statements were misunderstood... and that he respects Jordan's sovereignty and does not intend to attack any Jordanian citizen... we in Jordan, for our own diplomatic purposes, say that this is an answer [to our demands]," Foreign Minister Jawad Anani told reporters at a press conference.

In the wake of Crown Prince Hassan's visit to Tel Aviv March 10, the visit of Mr. Sharon himself to the Kingdom the day before, and the resumption of "normal" bilateral ties following a five-month chill after the Mossad's aborted attack, the Israeli minister reportedly said on public television that the Jewish state was still determined to kill Jordan's Hamas politburo chief Khaled Misha'al, but not on Jordanian soil.

Mr. Sharon, in charge of the Jordanian-Israeli portfolio, also said that Israel had informed Amman that it

intended to "finish off the job" of assassinating Mr. Misha'al — a claim flatly denied by Jordanian officials.

The Foreign Ministry Summoned Israel's ambassador to Jordan, Oded Eran, a day after Mr. Sharon's statement demanding an explanation — hence the letter.

The statement, aired on Israeli Channel Two on March 14, was unanimously blasted by Jordanian officials, the Parliament, the Islamist-led opposition and the media.

Mr. Sharon's letter, described by some officials as an apology, was a "clarifying" one claiming that he was "misunderstood" and that he "respected Jordan's sovereignty," officials have said. They added that the letter was a necessary move to placate Jordanians.

It is not clear from the contents of Mr. Sharon's letter leaked to the press so far, whether "consideration for Jordan's sovereignty" includes carrying out an attack against a Jordanian citizen, regardless of wherever he/she may be.

Dr. Anani said that it was "up to the Jordanian government" to decide whether to publish the full letter at a later date or not.

Bilateral relations reached their lowest point after the Mossad's aborted attack on Mr. Misha'al on Sept. 25

and led to the curtailment of security cooperation to a minimum. Full security cooperation was resumed two weeks ago.

According to one official, Mr. Sharon had no prior knowledge that Mr. Misha'al is a Jordanian citizen when he made his remarks.

Jordanian officials said that the Hamas office in Amman, including Mr. Misha'al, is not involved in any "terrorism" activities against Israel. They insist that the only reason Mr. Misha'al was targeted by the Mossad is because he is a "soft target" whose killing would alleviate public pressure on the Israeli government following the July 30 Jerusalem bombing.

Mr. Sharon is still largely remembered in Jordan for his role in Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the Sabra and Shatila massacre that ensued, as well as advocating the "Jordan is Palestine" Israeli option.

Some Jordanian officials, however, see him as being willing and able to implement that various provisions of the 1994 peace treaty.

In light of what it sees as the most recent flagrant Israeli "threat," the Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement yesterday demanding that Jordan dismiss the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, shut the embassy, and halt "normalisation" with the Jewish state.

## Israeli warplanes attack guerrilla bases in southern Lebanon

SIDON (AP) — Israeli warplanes staged two raids Monday on suspected Hizbollah guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon, Lebanese security officials said.

Two Israeli fighter jets fired four air-to-surface missiles at about 10:15 a.m. local time near the village of Aqmat in Iqlim Al Tuffah, or the Apple Province, the officials said. The jets returned three

hours later to fire four more missiles at the nearby Loueizeh Mountain, they added.

They spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

The area, about 15-kilometre southeast of the port city of Sidon, is a stronghold of the Hizbollah group. It is just north of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

A Hizbollah official in Sidon said no guerrillas

were killed or injured in the first raid. He, too, spoke on condition his name not be used. There was no immediate word on casualties from the afternoon strike.

In Jerusalem, the Israeli army said its planes hit "a terrorist base" in southern Lebanon in the morning raid.

Israeli warplanes often target the Apple Province,

(Continued on page 7)



## Kuwaiti prisoner release 'positive step' toward Arab reconciliation — Anani

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani on Monday described a Kuwaiti decision to release several Jordanian prisoners as a "positive step" toward reconciliation among Arab countries.

Dr. Anani said he sent a message to his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Sabah Al Jaber Al Sabah to "thank him for their decision."

"We also requested the release of the remaining prisoners and we hope that other

Arab states will follow suit [in releasing Jordanian prisoners]," the minister said in a press conference.

The message followed a Kuwaiti decision to release four Jordanian prisoners, jailed in Kuwait since 1991 for alleged collaboration with the Iraqi army during the seven-month-old occupation of the emirate, on Feb. 25, which coincided with Kuwait's national day.

One of the released, Mohammed Alam Al Dinne, arrived in Amman on Thursday, but the arrival of the remaining three has been

delayed until some technical procedures are completed.

In the past two years, Kuwait has released more than 25 Jordanian prisoners following mediation from Oman and Qatar. Government figures show that more than 25 detainees are still in Kuwait.

Dozens of Jordanians and Palestinians were arrested following the "liberation" of Kuwait, tried by a Kuwaiti security court and later sentenced to different jail terms.

Jordan's ties with Kuwait were damaged following the 1990-91 Gulf war due to the Kingdom's perceived tilt

towards Iraq.

The Kingdom refused to join a U.S.-led military coalition that drove the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, advocating instead a peaceful solution to the crisis, which angered Kuwait.

The Jordanian embassy in Kuwait was closed and the emirate refused to re-open the embassy. The Kuwaiti embassy in Amman has been run by a charge d'affaires since 1991.

Several Jordanians and Palestinians were killed by Kuwaiti civilians and security following the pullout of the Iraqi army.



TRYING TO REBUILD HOME: This WTN TV grab shows Israeli soldiers scuffling Sunday with a Palestinian family in Hebron as they were taken into custody. The Palestinians were reportedly trying to rebuild their home, which had been demolished by Israeli authorities two weeks ago. Soldiers arrested the father, mother and two children. The soldiers also attempted to confiscate building tools (AFP photo)

## Kuwaiti emir swears in new cabinet amid criticism from Islamists

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, swore in a new government on Monday, amid criticism from the Islamist opposition over the way the cabinet was reshuffled to protect a minister.

The new team, headed as in previous governments by the crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, was announced Sunday, a week after it resigned to avoid a vote of no-confidence against the information minister, Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah.

Sheikh Saud was named oil minister in the new cabinet.

The minister, a former Kuwaiti ambassador to Britain and the United States, was accused by Islamist deputies of authorising the exhibition, during a book fair here in November, of books judged capable of "damaging Islam."

Islamist deputies, quoted in newspapers on Monday, criticised his return to the cabinet lineup.

"I believe this is a violation of the constitution, and we fear that in the future any

minister can just change portfolios to escape questioning by deputies," said MP Fahd Al Khana.

Another Islamist deputy, Walid Tabatabai, said the new lineup showed that the government "does not want to cooperate nor turn a new page with the legislative branch."

Kuwait's ruling Al Sabah family retained the key ministries of foreign affairs, defence, interior, finance and oil in the cabinet, which has four new faces in the posts of finance, planning, information and public works.

## Trial of Algerians charged in murder of priests opens

ALGIERS (AP) — The trial of 12 alleged Islamist activists charged with the 1996 killing of a French Roman Catholic bishop and his bodyguard in the Algerian port of Oran has opened.

Eleven of the accused allegedly belong to the Armed Islamic Group, which is seeking to overthrow the Algerian government.

The 12th has not been apprehended and is being tried in absentia.

The accused are charged with planning the bomb that exploded and killed Monsignor Henri-Pierre Clavier as well as his bodyguard in August 1996 after they had attended a ceremony for seven French monks who were allegedly killed by Islamic activists.

The accused face the death penalty if convicted. All of them deny membership in a terrorist group.

Heavy security surrounded the courtroom. The court is expected to resume Monday with lawyers for both sides likely to speak.

## Eight shepherds kidnapped, six people injured in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Eight shepherds have been kidnapped in western Algeria, and six people were injured by an explosion in Medea, south of Algiers, the Algerian press reported Monday.

The shepherds and their flocks were seized by an armed group on Sunday near Saïda, the pro-government newspaper L'Authentique said.

At Medea six people were

injured when a homemade bomb exploded in the path of a bus.

One of the injured is in a critical condition, according to Al Watan newspaper.

Elsewhere a car was machine-gunned when it drove through a false roadblock at Al Affroun, also near Medea.

The daily Liberté newspaper reported that two young women had escaped from

armed militants who kidnapped them during massacres in the west of the country, in January.

They walked for several days before reaching safety, according to Liberté.

Islamists have reportedly carried off young women during attacks on remote villages to act as servants and sex slaves, with those who fall pregnant facing death.

## Qatari emir arrives for meetings with Mubarak

CAIRO (AP) — Qatar's emir arrived in Egypt on Monday and met briefly with President Hosni Mubarak for what were believed to be fence-mending talks aimed at ending feuds between the two nations.

"My belief is that this visit will... cement the strong brotherly relations and increase cooperation between our countries," the emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, said in a statement distributed at the airport on his arrival.

The statement also expressed "the mutual interest in maintaining con-

tact and exchanging views in matters that are important to our countries."

Mr. Mubarak and the emir will meet again during his visit, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

"There are no problems between Egypt and Qatar," he added.

Qatar was angered when Egypt joined a number of Arab countries — including Saudi Arabia — in boycotting the Middle East and North Africa Economic Conference in the Qatari capital Doha last fall.

Qatar's foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Al Thani, responded by

accusing Cairo of complicity in a failed 1996 coup attempt against the Qatari emir. Egypt then recalled its ambassador, but later sent him back.

The two countries reconciled when Saudi Arabia's King Fahd hosted a meeting between Sheikh Hamad and Mubarak. But Qatar later expelled a number of Egyptian workers, angering Egypt again.

Shortly before Sheikh Hamad arrived, Mubarak met with Prince Mohammed Bin Fahd, who is King Fahd's son and the governor of the oil-rich Eastern province.

## Israel lifts entry ban on radical American rabbi

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has lifted an entry ban against a militant U.S. rabbi who was barred from the country after publicly calling for the death of the late Premier Yitzhak Rabin, officials said Monday.

The Israeli interior ministry said it had decided to permit the entry of Rabbi Abraham Hecht of New York "because he has made amends for his actions and no longer represents a threat according to the secret service."

Rabbi Hecht caused an uproar in July 1995 by calling then Israeli Prime Minister Rabin a "traitor" and an "informant" for granting Palestinians control over West Bank territory viewed by Jews as the biblical lands of Israel.

The charges of being an informant against fellow Jews is a crime punishable by death according to Jewish religious tradition.

Rabin was assassinated in November 1995 by a Jewish militant, Yigal Amir, who said he acted to prevent the government from giving up more land to the Palestinians.

The decision to permit Rabbi Hecht to enter Israel raised a storm of protest on the political left.

"His visit will be sheer hell. We will hound him wherever he goes until he decides to return home in disgrace," said Yossi Sarid, leader of the opposition Meretz Party.

Enuh Barak, of Rabin's Labour Party, called the decision to allow Rabbi Hecht into Israel "scandalous."

Opposition deputies demanded the interior ministry, headed by Eli Shais of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, reverse its decision and threatened to go before the high court to prevent Rabbi Hecht from entering the country. Officials were unable to say when Rabbi Hecht might visit Israel but public radio said he planned to come soon.

## Jerusalem patriarch, Israeli rabbis hold first meet

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, met for the first time Monday with Israel's two chief rabbis in a bid to promote peace and denounce violence in the Middle East.

Monsignor Sabbah met for about an hour here with Eliahu Bakshi-Doron, chief rabbi of Israel's Sephardic Jews, and with Israel Meir Lau, head of the Ashkenazi community of Jews.

"We say that religious leaders should be and must be educators and agents for peace," said Monsignor Sabbah, the first Palestinian to hold the post of Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem and a frequent critic of Israeli actions in the occupied territories.

"Violence has been used on both sides — by Israelis and Palestinians — and we say that violence is useless... violence will never lead us to peace," he told reporters after the meeting.

"All of us must know that the only way to make peace is peace," he added.

Rabbi Israel Lau said he had welcomed Monsignor Sabbah "as a brother, because you call us your elder brothers and because our roots are all in the Bible, the same holy book."

Monday's meeting came after the Vatican last week issued a long-awaited declaration on the Holocaust which acknowledged Christian responsibility for

failing to respond vigorously to the persecution of Jews by the Nazis but denied any role in the genocide by the Church.

Addressing the issue only indirectly, Monsignor Sabbah said "relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people stem from a past history of persecution of the Jewish people on the part of Christians, not only the Catholic Church but all the Christians in the West."

## Palestinians call on Annan to help free prisoners

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Some 500 relatives of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons marched in Gaza City on Monday calling on visiting U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to pressure Israel for their sons' release.

The demonstrators, many of them women holding up pictures of their imprisoned sons and husbands, marched to the

offices of the United Nations ahead of Mr. Annan's arrival in Gaza for talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, witnesses said.

"We call on Kofi Annan to work for our relatives' liberation," and "No peace without the release of prisoners," read banners held up by the demonstrators.

The United Nations chief was to meet personally

with relatives of Palestinian prisoners later in the day after his talks with Mr. Arafat, centering on peace talks with Israel.

"Israel has stalled on implementing its agreements to release prisoners. Annan must pressure Israel to live up to its agreements," Hisham Abdel Razeq, the chief Palestinian official on prisoners' issues, told journalists.

The Prisoners' Club, a prisoners' rights group, called on Mr. Annan to "force Israel to conform to the Geneva Convention" and form an international commission "to investigate Israeli measures against prisoners."

The group, in a statement, protested "the continuing Israeli policies of torture" against Palestinian prisoners.

Israel currently holds around 3,000 Palestinians in its prisons. Under 1995 self-rule agreements it is due to release many of them.

Mr. Annan is due to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday on the latest leg of a Middle East tour which has taken him to Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

#### PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 .....Cartoon — C.R.O.  
16:30 .....French programmes  
18:00 Quiz Show — Small Talk  
18:30 .....Drama — Border Town  
19:00 .....News Headlines  
19:15 Doc. — De Cause Affet  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 Comedy — Pride and Joy  
20:00 .....What Would You Do?  
20:30 .....Encounter  
21:10 .....Drama — Acapolo Bay  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:30 Feature Film — "Heads"  
23:59 .....Metro Cafe  
00:30 .....End of T.X.

#### PRAYER TIMES

04:13 .....Fajr  
05:31 .....(Sunrise) Duha  
11:42 .....Dhuhr  
15:11 .....Asr  
17:53 .....Maghreb  
19:10 .....Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel.  
4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel.  
4622366

Anglican Church Tel.  
4624853/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox  
Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church  
Tel. 865897

German-speaking Evangelical  
Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter  
Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la  
Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation  
Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.  
4623541

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh  
Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church  
Tel. 4624757

The English-Language  
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel.  
892679

The Baptist Church Tel.  
4628052

The Armenian Catholic  
Church Tel. 771331

#### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department  
of Meteorology

Cold weather conditions will  
prevail, skies cloudy to partly  
cloudy with a chance of scattered  
showers in the northern  
parts of the Kingdom gradually  
extending to other regions, and  
winds northwesterly active. Thin  
snow is expected to fall over  
heights in northern areas. Temperatures  
are expected to rise  
effective Wednesday with stable  
weather conditions prevailing.  
In Aqaba, skies will be partly  
cloudy, winds southerly moderate  
to active, and seas rough.

Amman .....09/09

Aqaba .....09/20

Deserts .....03/13

Jordan Valley .....08/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 16, Aqaba 25 Humidity  
readings: Amman 33 per  
cent, Aqaba 23 per cent.

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain .....4623029

Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh .....736011

Dr. Hisham Kan'an .....790286

Dr. Khalid Al-Astour .....832600

Ferdous pharmacy .....778336

Al Asena pharmacy .....4637055

Al Salam pharmacy .....4636730

Yacoub pharmacy .....464945

Shmeisani pharmacy .....4637660

Naboukh pharmacy .....4625672

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir .....78770

Al Quds pharmacy .....( )

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad .....985550

Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

#### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue  
.....4630341

Civil Defence Emergency .....199

Rescue Police (92) 4621111, 4677777

Fire Brigade .....4617101

Blood Bank .....775121

Highway Police .....843402

Traffic Police .....896390

Public Security Dept. ....4680521

Hotel Complaints .....5605800

Price Complaints .....5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints  
.....787111

#### TELEPHONE INFORMATION (directory assistance)

Overseas Calls .....121

Central Amman Telephone  
.....010230

Repairs .....4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs .....5661401

Jordan Television .....773111

Radio Jordan .....774111

Water Authority .....5680100

J. Electricity Authority .....815615

Electric Power Co. ....4636381

RJ Flight Information .....44-  
53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport .....44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special  
Surgery .....5921199

The Islamic, Abdali .....5661317

Huseini Mahad Centre Tel.  
836813, 856856

Luzmila .....4630195

Khalidi Maternity .....464281/6

Akileh Maternity .....464244/2

Jabal Amman Maternity  
4642362

Malhas, J. Amman .....4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani .....5607071

Shmeisani Hospital .....5669131

University Hospital .....545845

Al-Muasher Hospital 566722/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir .....775111/26

Army, Marka .....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 560240/50

Amal Hospital .....5674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital  
.....(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital  
.....(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital .....(09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital  
.....(09)990999

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital  
.....02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital  
.....02)27275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital  
.....02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital  
.....03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 .....Sanaa (RJ)

07:25 .....Damascus (RJ)

09:15 .....Aqaba (add) (RJ)

06:50 .....Aqaba (add) (RJ)

08:25 .....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

11:15 .....Vienna, Brussels (RJ)

12



## Union hails decision cancelling licensing procedures

By Ahmad Khatib  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Taxi Owners Union (TOU) Monday hailed the High Court's decision to cancel tough public transportation ownership procedures issued by Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid last August.

"The court's ruling was fair and in favour of all citizens," TOU President Abdullah Qaisi told the Jordan Times. "The Ministry's procedures were unfair."

The court on Sunday revoked the controversial procedures, which would have prohibited taxi owners from selling their cars as public vehicles, a regulation that most taxi owners claim would depreciate the value of their vehicles.

Other regulations stipulated a requirement of JD1 million in capital and at least 75 operating cars for the establishment of a taxi office in Amman, with reduced obligations for offices in other cities.

The court last September suspended the licensing procedures after Attorney Zuhair Abu Ragheb filed a lawsuit on behalf of the TOU. He claimed that over 10,000 citizens would suffer tremendous financial losses as a result of the new regulations.

Days later, the High Court halted the regulations until it reviewed the case.

Government officials have long insisted that the new procedures would not affect taxis currently operating. They said the move was needed to help modernise the country's ageing fleet of taxis to meet an expected increase in tourists visiting the region over the next three years.

The government suggested that taxi owners merge with new companies.



PRINCESS ATTENDS CONFERENCE: HRH Princess Rahmah attends the Jordanian Youth Conference, which was held Monday at Al Hussein Sports City marking the 51st birthday of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan (Petra photo)

## Health minister calls for closer Arab drug industry cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi on Monday called for closer cooperation among the Arab World's pharmaceutical industries and highlighted the need to adopt a unified system governing the manufacturing process.

Dr. Kurdi's remarks were delivered on his behalf by ministry Secretary General Mahmoud Amin at the opening of a two-day workshop on "The Requirements for the Registration of Drugs in the European Union (EU) Countries."

The minister said Arab

states can also boost their pharmaceutical production by establishing common interests among firms through investing joint capital and coordinating production programmes.

Dr. Kurdi said that identifying the requirements to register drugs in Europe can open the door for exports to the EU.

In his remarks, Anis Muasher, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Pharmaceutical Producers, said Jordan imported 83 per cent of its total medicine imports from Europe.

Jordanian pharmaceutical industries employ 4,500

workers and their combined exports earned the country \$150 million last year, totalling 12 per cent of Jordan's total exports.

He said the Jordanian firms are striving to meet the EU's requirements and specifications and are continuing to cooperate with European firms in this regard.

A U.S. Food and Drug Administration representative said Arab drug manufacturing industries have to cater to the specifications of Europe and the U.S. and improve their products if they wish to compete in world markets.

## Germany agrees to reschedule nearly JD36.4 million of Kingdom's debt

AMMAN (J.T.) — Germany has agreed to reschedule around JD36.4 million of Jordan's debts to Bonn, according to an agreement signed Monday by German Ambassador Peter Mende and Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez.

The amount includes JD34.8 million agreed on under bilateral financial cooperation and JD1.55 million of commercial claims.

The agreement is in line with the outcome of the Paris Club meeting of May 1997, in which, with the participation of the German government, a

JD430 nearly million debt relief in favour of Jordan was decided upon, according to a German embassy press release.

The JD34.8 million will be paid in 20 semi-annual installments at a 2.7 per cent interest rate following an 11-year grace period. The first installment is scheduled to be paid in October 2008.

The JD1.55 million in commercial claims will be paid in 30 semi-annual installments at a seven per cent interest rate beginning October 2001.

In addition to debt rescheduling, the agreement provides

for the cancellation of nearly JD15.8 million from the JD34.8 million on the condition that half of the amount is spent by the Jordanian government on environment protection and preservation projects or poverty alleviation projects.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Hafez said Jordan has gained very favourable terms in line with the Paris Club decisions.

He voiced Jordan's appreciation of Germany for assistance aimed at strengthening the Jordanian economy, adding that the Kingdom's implementation of the eco-

nomie restructuring programme has helped it enjoy such assistance from Germany and other nations.

For his part, Mr. Mende said his government is ready to continue supporting Jordan, which he said is linked to Germany with very strong political and economic ties.

Jordan has been one of the main beneficiaries of German economic assistance, with an overall amount of nearly JD774 million, most of which was spent on projects in the water and irrigation sector. In 1997, Germany granted JD23.2 million to Jordan.

## Agriculture minister to Damascus for FAO meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha left Monday for Damascus, where he will present a working paper on Jordan's ongoing efforts to increase food production to a U.N. Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) meeting.

The working paper, he said in a pre-departure statement, provides details of the Kingdom's endeavours at the government and private sector levels to implement resolutions passed by the FAO on ways to deal with hunger by increasing food production, as well as agricultural projects being implemented with help from U.N. agencies and international organisations.

According to Mr. Khreisha, major projects include land development, land reclamation, and utilising agricultural land for horizontal and vertical production, as well as plans aimed at increasing the involvement of women in food production in the rural areas of Jordan.

During the two-day meetings, the participating delegates will review the measures that have been taken by their respective countries to implement the resolutions of the FAO-sponsored World Food Summit.

The minister noted that the conference will discuss the 1996 and 1997 FAO reports and will endorse an emergency plan for combating animal and plant diseases, as well as pest control.

Mr. Khreisha said the conference is also scheduled to cover increasing cooperation between the FAO and Middle Eastern countries.

## Lufthansa to resume flights to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The German airline Lufthansa will resume flights to Jordan next Monday following a seven-year interruption of service, Lufthansa agents announced Monday.

Atallah Kichek, a Lufthansa representative in Jordan, said the German airline, which stopped its flights to Amman at the time of the Gulf war in 1991, plans three flights a week between Amman and Frankfurt.

The first flight will carry an official delegation from

Lufthansa and tourist and travel agents from Germany, other European countries, and the U.S., according to Mr. Kichek.

The delegation will be accompanied by a German press delegation whose members will be taken on a tour of economic projects and tourist and archaeological sites in the Kingdom by officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, he added.

Mr. Kichek said the resumption of flights is con-

sidered an encouraging step for promoting tourism, as the airline will provide facilities for an exchange of visits by businesspeople in Jordan and Europe.

Civil Aviation Authority Director General Jasser Ziyad and Royal Jordanian (RJ) officials will welcome the delegation and the journalists upon their arrival.

An RJ official said the airline maintained service over the past seven years to Frankfurt and currently makes four flights a week.

## Government seeking to make Jordan regional information centre — Ensour

AMMAN (Petra) — Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour on Monday said the government is seeking to make Jordan into a unique information and media centre for the Middle East.

Addressing a group of journalists and reporters working in Amman for Arab satellite television stations, Dr. Ensour said Jordan's openness to the cultures of the world, its free and open economy, and the wide margin of freedom would allow the country to serve as a regional media centre.

Dr. Ensour said he has instructed heads of information services to amend and develop legislation with a view to allowing official information services more freedom and independence and offering all possible facilities to

international media services to operate freely from Jordan.

Emphasising the importance of the various satellite television services, Dr. Ensour said everything possible should be done to enable the correspondents of various media services to reflect a positive impression of Jordan.

The Ministry of Information will exert all efforts to support the private sector media and will provide all possible facilities for its work, he said.

The government will build bridges of confidence with the independent media, a status which will include the actual Jordanian media in the future, the acting prime minister noted.

He said official institutions will not assume the role of the sole source of information, gradually

opening the arena for a free and independent media to assume this role.

But, he said, the government will consult with officials working for the official media and will seek their assistance in drawing up a draft law on a free and independent radio and television in Jordan.

The government plans to modernise all legislation connected with radio, television, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, and the Press and Publications Department in a manner that would help these agencies become independent, said Dr. Ensour.

Under the new amendments, the minister of information will assume the role of supervisor, with only some authority that can be transferred to the directors of these agencies, he added.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Ra'd receives Canadian cheque for factory renovation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid received a \$14,110 cheque from the Canadian government to finance the renovation of Al Najah Filing Factory in Hiteen Camp. The factory was established in 1986 to create job opportunities for the blind.

Anani to Cairo for Arab League meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Jawad Anani left Monday for Cairo to take part in an Arab League meeting. The two-day meeting will touch upon the latest developments in the Middle East, inter-Arab relations and issues of common concern to the Arab World.

Temperatures to drop slightly

AMMAN (Petra) — Temperatures will drop slightly today, with partly cloudy to cloudy conditions and a possibility of scattered showers and snow in northern areas. Winds will be westerly moderate to active.

## JD15.4 million Balqa telephone project under way

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) is currently conducting a JD15.4 million telephone system expansion and modernisation project in the Balqa governorate, according to Walid Dweik, chairman of the company's board of directors.

Mr. Dweik said the project aims at creating 35,197 new telephone lines by adding three modern telephone exchanges and sub-exchanges that together will cover 95

areas within the governorate.

According to Mr. Dweik, the project consists of the Salt telephone exchange, which will include seven sub-exchanges together creating 20,797 new lines, Al Fuheis telephone exchange with 5,000 new lines and Ain Al Basha exchange, which will add 9,400 lines.

He said the Ain Al Basha and Fuheis exchanges will together cost JD6.5 million, with the balance of the cost going to the Salt exchange.

### what's going on

#### FILM

\* "Loch Ness" at the British Council, Jabal Amman on Wednesday, March 25, at 5:00 p.m.

#### PRESENTATION

\* "Storytelling, Poetry and Technology" by award-winning novelist and literary critic Al Young at the USIS Auditorium, American Center, Abdoun at 5:00 p.m.

#### EXHIBITIONS

\* Paintings on handmade paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra St. (Tel. 5699141/2), until April 25.

\* "Colours of Life" at Books@Cafe (Tel. 837931/2), until March 31.

\* Works by late Iraqi artist Seddih Ahmad at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5695027), until March 29.

\* Works by Sana Kayyali at Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 5681303/4), until March 26. (Proceeds will go to Al Quds Al Sharif Defending Association).

## Brotherhood leader urges Majali to abrogate Israel peace treaty

By Ghadeer Taher  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Muslim Brotherhood on Monday urged the government to abrogate the peace treaty with Israel, which it said continues to threaten the Kingdom's sovereignty and stability.

In a letter to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Abdul Majid Thuneibat, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, urged the government to take measures against Israel in light of its threatening statements against Jordan's "dignity and sovereignty."

Dr. Thuneibat said Israel has not changed its "Zionist policy of threatening our security and stability in disregard to the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty."

There was no response Monday to Dr. Thuneibat's letter from the government. The Islamic leader faulted the government for not adequately responding to what he described as "accusatory" statements

made by former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Jordan-Israel security cooperation. Mr. Peres reportedly told an Israeli television programme that Jordan allowed a Mossad office in Amman to operate and that security cooperation between the two countries had existed for over two decades.

In the letter, which was made available to the Jordan Times, Dr. Thuneibat said the government had misread the reasons behind the resignation of Mossad chief Danny Yatom. According to Dr. Thuneibat, Mr. Yatom was forced to resign not because of the assassination attempt on Hamas leader Khalid Misha'al, but because the operation had failed. Senior officials maintained that Mr. Yatom was removed from his post under pressure from Jordan.

Two Mossad agents tried to kill the Hamas leader in Amman last fall and a subsequent Israeli investigation criticised the failure of the operation but not the principle of killing a Jordanian national on Jordanian soil.

"So if there is security cooperation with the Zionist entity, a number of questions are raised about who this cooperation is directed against," Dr. Thuneibat said.

"To top off all these threatening actions, [Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel] Sharon makes statements ridiculing Jordanian sovereignty, security and interests."

Mr. Sharon recently told Israel's Channel Two television that Israel informed Jordan that it intends to "finish off" the job of killing Mr. Misha'al but not on Jordanian soil. After Jordan demanded an explanation, Mr. Sharon sent a letter to HRH Crown Prince Hassan clarifying his statements, officials have said.

"Why is this criminal [Sharon] chosen to be responsible for the Jordanian-Israeli file? And why

do we accept that when we know that he possesses a well-known terrorist record?" Dr. Thuneibat asked the premier in his two-page letter.

He described the Sharon statement as "dangerous," but said that what was more "alarming" was the Jordanian response, which seems aimed at "alleviating the embarrassment of the enemy more than anything else."

He said a visit made by a group of deputies earlier this month to Tel Aviv was in "stark contrast" to the Jordanian people's rejection of normalising relations with Israel.

"Based on all of this, we say we do not need peace with this enemy that we have known for centuries," Dr. Thuneibat told Dr. Majali. He demanded that the government reconsider the peace treaty with Israel, stop normalisation, expel Israel's ambassador and prevent Mr. Sharon and the rest of the "Zionist criminals" from entering Jordan.

## U.S. Information Agency launches Arabic-language home page

By Ahmed Naser  
Special to the Jordan Times

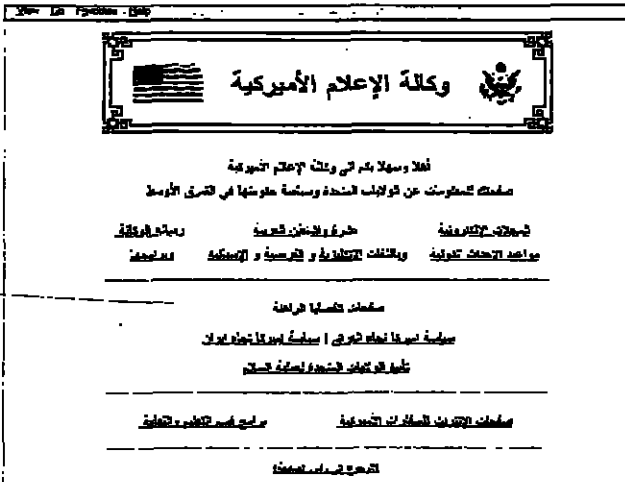
AMMAN — The United States Information Agency (USIA) has introduced an Arabic version of its home page that replicates the English-language site, according to an official statement.

With Arabic-speaking audiences in mind, the site, available at [www.usia.gov/regional/nea/arabic/usianea.htm](http://www.usia.gov/regional/nea/arabic/usianea.htm), can be surfed with an Arabic-enabled browser, the United States Information Service (USIS) said in a press release.

Like the English site, the Arabic version has a special current affairs section focusing on U.S. foreign policy towards Iraq, Iran and the various tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The site also caters to surfers looking for a more in-depth analysis of issues, as its Electronic Journals page, published on an irregular rotating cycle, has five sections recently provided in Arabic — Economic Perspectives, U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda, U.S. Society and Values, Global Issues, and Issues of Democracy. A new subject appears every three weeks.

New information provided in Arabic also includes an archive of the USIS' past two years of press releases and transmissions from the U.S. State Department. The department's daily



A screen shot of the USIA's new Arabic-language home page. The site is available at [www.usia.gov/regional/nea/arabic/usianea.htm](http://www.usia.gov/regional/nea/arabic/usianea.htm)

press briefings in English can also be listened to by visiting [www.audionet.com/events/usstate](http://www.audionet.com/events/usstate).

In addition, the Voice of America's (VOA) site presents a daily vocal news transmission in a number of languages: Arabic, Russian, Bosnian, Chinese, Korean and Swahili, to name a few.

But to be able to listen to these transmissions, Real Audio software, obtained for free from the Internet or accompanying leading computer magazines, is needed.

This reporter, however, learned that the 10-minute voice transmissions are not easily accessible for listening due to Jordan's poor Internet connections.

Messages such as "Net congested," showing the inadequacy of the connection, kept plugging a test drive performed at different times of the day to access VOA's transmissions.

Nevertheless, text content of the English Home Page has been available, locally to Jordan's on-liners since the USIS service was first made available through the USIA Wireless File conference on National Equipment and Technical Services (NETS) three years ago.

The conference transmits a daily bulletin named the Washington File in English, of which Arabic translations are provided a day late in the form of attachments to e-mails.



## Pope stresses human rights at mass in troubled Nigeria

ABUJA (AFP) — Pope John Paul II launched another forceful defence of human rights Monday at an open-air mass in military-ruled Nigeria, when he addressed hundreds of thousands of people in Kubwa near the capital Abuja.

On the final day of a three-day pastoral visit, the Pontiff also lectured Roman Catholics in Africa's most populous nation, facing severe challenges on both the democratic and the AIDS fronts, on the importance of family values and the "inviolability" of life.

"There exist, in fact, basic human rights of which no individual can ever be legitimately deprived, for they are rooted in the very nature of the human person and reflect the objective and inviolable demands of a universal moral law," he said.

The Pontiff arrived in Kubwa at 8:45 a.m. (0745 GMT) and was given an enthusiastic welcome by the crowds as he traversed the venue for the gathering in his "Popemobile."

His message of national reconciliation and respect

for the rights of the individual underlined themes he has touched on repeatedly since arriving in oil-rich but impoverished and politically troubled Nigeria Saturday.

"Respect for every human person, for his dignity and rights, must ever be the inspiration and guiding principle behind your efforts to increase democracy and strengthen the social fabric of your country."

Christians, Catholic or otherwise, are estimated to comprise about 45 per cent of Nigeria's population. Another 45 per cent are held to be Muslim, including numerous army officers, and traditional animist beliefs are still deep-rooted.

The Pope was thought to have discussed human rights during a 20-minute meeting Saturday with strongman General Sani Abacha, who seized power in 1993 but has pledged to hand over to an elected civilian government next October.

Members of Gen. Abacha's military junta were present on the podium

for Monday's mass — notably the minister in charge of the federal capital, General Jeremiah Useni, and navy chief Admiral Mike Akhigbe.

Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi and Finance Minister Anthony Ani were also present.

"The dignity of every human being, his inalienable fundamental rights, the inviolability of life, freedom and justice, the sense of solidarity and the rejection of discrimination: these must be the building blocks of a new and better Nigeria," the pontiff said.

Saturday, the Pope had appealed to the military regime to grant clemency to 60 political detainees from a list compiled by the Civil Liberties Organisation, a prominent human rights group based in the economic capital Lagos.

The human rights issue also figured prominently in a mass celebrated Sunday in Onitsha — the centre of Nigerian Roman Catholicism — to beatify a Cistercian monk who died in 1964.

Father Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi was the first west African to be beatified, a process which precedes sainthood.

In Monday's address, Pope John Paul also stressed the importance of family values in combating discrimination and intolerance.

"The family is the foundation and basis of every human community and society," he said.

"It is precisely in relationships within the family and between families that justice and integrity become an immediate reality and a practical commitment."

In a country where HIV infection is believed to have reached near-epidemic proportions, though accurate estimates are impossible, the Roman Catholic leader also urged "unfailing compassion" towards AIDS sufferers.

The Pope was flanked on both sides of the podium by Nigerian archbishops and bishops wearing white robes that bore pictures of the Pontiff and Father Tansi.



Local elders representing the different regions of Nigeria perform the "Dance of the Elders" during a mass given in the village of Kubwa on the outskirts of the capital Abuja (Reuters photo)

## Indian nationalists set to survive confidence vote as rivals split

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The chances of India's fledgling Hindu nationalist coalition government surviving a touch-and-go confidence vote later this week soared Monday when a split emerged among its rivals.

The rift, which looks set to save the right-wing nationalists from possible defeat in the motion, coincided with the reconvening of parliament in New Delhi and sent share prices soaring.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee must prove his majority in a motion starting Friday after being sworn in last week following inconclusive national elections.

As he took his parliamentary oath of office Monday, a regional party, the DTP (Telugu Desam Party), announced it had "disassociated" itself from the United Front alliance, one of two main blocs opposing the nationalists.

TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, a senior member of the Front, said the alliance had "humiliated" him by taking decisions without his knowledge.

"The chapter is over," he said.

The Hindu nationalist coalition, led by Mr. Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) and including a dozen regional partners, currently commands 264 of 545 seats in a badly-fragmented parliament.

The BJP, accused by rivals of being sectarian and anti-Muslim, is wooing minor parties to try to put together an outright majority.

If the 12-seat TDP joins its ranks or even abstains, Mr. Vajpayee is sure of surviving the confidence vote.

Indian share prices responded by surging ahead almost three per cent within 15 minutes of trade.

"This is a good development for the market and increases the stability of the government," stockbroker Gaurav Sanghi said.

The only previous BJP government, formed in 1996, lasted 13 days.

Mr. Vajpayee's administration is the fifth Indian government within two years following a spate of political crises.

India's February-March elections produced a parliament split between three main formations, the BJP and allies, the Congress (141 seats) and the United Front (96). The latter two are unequivocally anti-nationalist.

The Front, a loose alliance of disparate groups, was formed to fill a power vacuum after 1996 elections.

Backed by the once-dominant Congress — now led by Sonia Gandhi, widow of former premier Rajiv Gandhi — it kept the Hindu nationalists out of power for 18 months.

The Front's uneasy rela-

tionship with the Congress, however, collapsed in November.

Mr. Naidu said he was opposed to a new anti-BJP partnership by the Front and the Congress.

He stressed at a press conference in Hyderabad, capital of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh where his party is based, that he would not join the BJP coalition.

But he accused the Front of "over-enthusiastically" backing a Congress candidate for the position of speaker of the lower house.

The TDP, it was later announced, was fielding its own candidate. The BJP, in a move seen as a clear attempt to win Mr. Naidu over to its camp, said it would back his candidate.

Congress spokeswoman Ambika Soni said Monday: "Naidu's decision may help the BJP to win the vote by a whisker — but for how long?"

"There are too many contradictions.... The government will live day-to-day, begging, pleading, coaxing and cajoling."

Mr. Vajpayee appealed Sunday for support for his government, saying Indian parties should cooperate and end their "perpetual confrontation."

India, the world's largest democracy with 600 million eligible voters, has held two general elections since 1996, each costing more than \$1 billion.

## Chadian security forces pursue search for European hostage

LIBREVILLE (AFP) — Chadian security forces pursued efforts Monday to find and free the last of eight Europeans taken hostage in northern Chad, as an armed opposition group claimed responsibility for their capture.

Chadian Communications Minister Haroun Kabadi told AFP by telephone that the eighth captive was being sought in an army sweep in the Tibesti region and that according to the government's latest information he was French.

Meanwhile, the opposition National Front for the Renewed Chad (FNTR) claimed responsibility for abducting eight people Sunday and stated that the last one was "safe and well", but would be held prisoner, while the others had been freed "for humanitarian reasons."

The eight tourists — six French and two Italian nationals — were seized Sunday as they were visiting Erni Koussi mountain in the Tibesti region.

Mr. Kabadi said security forces had freed seven of them and these were "in good shape and heading for Njamena" (the main northern Chad town), before being brought during the day to Njamena, the Chadian capital.

The FNTR said in a communiqué signed by its foreign relations spokesman Mahamat Adam, that the last hostage "will remain with the FNTR guerrillas until our demands have been met."

This, the statement explained, "means the withdrawal of French troops from Chad and the end of activities by oil companies in the country."

The French foreign ministry responded to Monday's statement, issued in Lagos and released in Paris, simply by saying that it was maintaining contact with the Chadian authorities and was not certain of the nationality of the last of the hostages.

Officials refused to make any further comment.

French troops have for decades been deployed in the largely desert nation of Chad, which became independent in 1960 and has seen a series of civil wars among rival warlords and territorial strife over the north with neighbouring Libya.

According to Mr. Kabadi, the kidnappers behind Sunday's move were "a group of six people from the region, including two or three military men."

## No chance for agreement on nuclear-free zone in near future

NASUGBU. Philippines (AFP) — There is little hope the world's nuclear powers will agree to an ASEAN protocol barring nuclear weapons from the region in the next four or five years, the head of an Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting said here Monday.

Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Lauro Baja, who chaired a just-concluded senior ASEAN officers meeting in this town outside Manila, said there was still strong opposition from the states and even some disagreements within ASEAN.

"The next four or five years, we cannot expect these nuclear states (to accede)" Mr. Baja said.

ASEAN is seeking to declare the region a zone free of nuclear weapons and an ASEAN working group is forging a protocol asking the nuclear powers to accede to the zone.

But Mr. Baja said the nuclear powers were still opposed because, under the protocol, the nuclear weapons-free zone would cover the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and continental shelves of

ASEAN members — which nuclear powers fear could affect the transit of nuclear armed vessels.

He said the United States, one of the nuclear powers, wants the protocol to clearly state it would not take precedence over the freedom of transit of vessels.

ASEAN in turn, has argued the nuclear-free zone would not conflict with other existing international treaties allowing free movement of vessels.

Philippine Assistant Foreign Secretary Juanito Jarasa, who headed the working group on the protocol, said France was even more hardline in its opposition because it wanted changes to the basic agreement barring nuclear weapons and not just on the protocol.

Mr. Jarasa said they were still awaiting formal responses from Russia and China, two other nuclear powers that would be asked to accede to the protocol.

Mr. Baja said they were hoping to get a more favourable response from China because "China, we feel, is the more liberal among the nuclear weapon

states."

Britain is also one of the nuclear powers being asked to accede to the protocol.

Some nuclear powers objected to a phrase in the protocol that would bar them from using nuclear weapons in South East Asia.

Mr. Baja said the Philippines had also been seeking a change in this phrase so it would not be in conflict with its mutual defence treaty with the United States but Vietnam, alone among the ASEAN members, was opposed to this change. Mr. Baja admitted he was uncertain how the nuclear-free zone might affect the Philippine-U.S. mutual defense treaty.

Sources earlier said China wanted the protocol to state it would not be used to bolster claims of sovereignty over certain areas, an apparent concern the protocol might affect areas where it has conflicting territorial claims with ASEAN members.

ASEAN includes Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

## Rioting Kenyan students clash with police, attack photographers

NAIROBI (AFP) — Police firing tear gas clashed Monday with hundreds of students throwing rocks and setting fires in downtown Nairobi to protest the enrolment of less qualified students for higher fees.

The police initially tried to disperse the students but were outnumbered and fled with stone-throwing students pursuing them.

Police reinforcements arrived a few hours later and engaged the students in running battles in the streets.

The students blocked two main thoroughfares in the Kenyan capital and smashed windows. Road traffic was paralysed, leading to huge traffic jams in the city centre.

The students beat a photographer for the ruling party newspaper, the Kenya Times, and poured petrol on him in an attempt to burn him alive. They also beat a woman photographer working for the Nation newspaper.

They said police would use press photographs to identify the rioters.

The students set on fire a van belonging to the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and commandeered another car belonging to the corporation, which they accused of biased reporting.

The rioters also looted an automobile service station, and shops on streets near the university were closed as students smashed windows and threatened to loot them too.

The students were protesting against a decision by local universities to enrol self-financing private students with lower grades than regular students already admitted.

The minimum qualifications for entry into any local medical college for full-time students is a mean grade of B+ at matriculation, but the new enrolment procedure for privately-sponsored students shows that the grade has been lowered to C+.

"The idea is to admit into the university anybody with money. Little regard is being given to competence and aptitude," a student told AFP.

Another said: "The university has been commercialised, rich academic failures can now join the university."

## Prince Charles off to Canada with Prince William and Prince Harry

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Prince Charles flies to Vancouver, Canada, Monday for a brief official visit followed by a few days skiing holiday with his sons William and Harry.

It will be Prince Charles' first official trip overseas with his two sons since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, last August.

Prince Charles is flying to Vancouver with Prince William, 13, second in line to the British throne, will fly there separately, a spokesman said.

They will join Prince Charles till Tuesday in Vancouver and tour the Pacific Space Centre, a museum that uses simulators and virtual reality equipment.

Afterwards they will go to Whistler for a ski holiday. Late last year Prince Harry accompanied his father on a visit to South Africa, which marked the beginning of Prince Charles' campaign to restore his public image in Britain following criticisms after Diana's death.

Prince Charles was last in Canada two years ago,

Prince William and Prince Harry were there in 1991 when they joined both their parents on the royal yacht Britannia for part of a tour.

St. James's Palace said Prince Charles' main purpose in making the trip was to enjoy a holiday with his sons, and show them a part of the world he loves.

It is being made possible by an invitation from Canadian millionaire businessman Galen Weston, an old polo-playing friend of Prince Charles. He will host the royal party at his mountain lodge at Whistler.

## 2 Afghans buried alive for sodomy

KABUL (AFP) — Two Afghans accused of sodomy were publicly executed by the Taliban militia by being buried under a mud and brick wall pushed on top of them, official sources said Monday.

The militia-controlled Radio Shariat said the two men were sentenced by the Taliban court in western Herat after their confession.

It said Abdul Sami, 18 and Bismillah, 22, both res-

idents of Herat province were detained four months ago accused of buggery.

The Shariah punishment for the crime was applied Sunday when the two were executed by having a wall pushed on top of them, it said.

Homosexuality is punishable by death in the two-thirds of Afghanistan controlled by the hardline Taliban militia.

They used the fatal method of pushing a thick

mud or brick wall on top of the accused rather than shoot or hang the culprit.

The death penalty was awarded after completing the "legal process" and obtaining the "approval" of the Taliban supreme leader, Mulla Muhammad Omar, the radio added.

The Taliban last month gave a similar punishment to three Afghans accused of buggery in southern Kandahar, the headquarters of the Muslim militia.

## China all set to launch two Iridium network satellites

BEIJING (AFP) — China is set to launch two American satellites using the Long March-2C/SD rockets from the Taiyuan launch site in the country's north, space industry officials said Monday.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Academy of Launching Technology (CALT) announced that China would send its first man into space by 2000 and to the moon early next century.

The two satellites of the Iridium network to be launched into a low-earth orbit early Wednesday by the same Smart Dispenser rocket, are part of a series of 20 payloads belonging to the U.S. firm Motorola, which are to be sent up in pairs in the coming years.

More launches are set for this year. Iridium is a cellular telecommunication network

ensuring worldwide coverage with the help of 66 interlinked satellites orbiting at altitudes of 630 kilometres. Each satellite weighs 689 kilograms and has a life of five to eight years.

Chinese press reports also announced four more launches of foreign and domestic satellites in 1998.

A Sino-Brazilian earth resources survey satellite, CBERS-1 (or ZY-1) will be put on a polar orbit by an LM4B rocket capable of lifting 2.8 tonnes.

The Long March-3B (LM3B) super-launcher, which can lift a five tonnes payload into a geostationary orbit, is to launch the Chinastar-1, built by the U.S. firm Lockheed-Martin for the China Oriental Telecom Satellite Company Ltd.

It will also launch the French Aerospatiale-built

Sinosat-1 for an official Chinese client.

By end-1998, the LM3B will have to lift China's biggest satellite yet, the Chinastar-8.

The \$100-million satellite weighing four tonnes, is being built by the U.S. firm, Space Systems/Loral, for the Chinese satellite transmission and telecommunications corporation, ChinaSat, under the former ministry of posts and telecommunications.

While the LM3B is the most powerful Chinese rocket equipped with four thrust motors, it is inadequate for manned flights, said Xu Dazhe, vice president of CALT, whose 27,000 scientists and engineers have worked on the Long March family.

"Launch vehicles with a payload capacity of over 10 tonnes can, in fact, carry astro-

nauts into orbit," Mr. Xu was quoted by Xinhua news agency as saying.

"However, the capacity will have to be increased to 20 tonnes or more for more deep space exploration, including lunar and planetary explorations."

The most powerful Chinese rocket for use in low earth orbit launches is the LM2E, which can lift a 9.5-tonne payload.

"China has already launched recoverable capsules into space carrying animals, but does not yet have the capacity to launch manned vehicles even into low-earth orbits," a foreign expert said.

"It will go all out to send its man into space, if only for the sake of national pride, but the Chinese really lack the means to develop in this area as it needs very large investments," the expert added.

## Prosecution wants Korea's No

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## Moldova Communists ahead, voters dislike reforms

CHISINAU (R) — Moldovans appeared to reject the country's current market reform programme Monday as the Communist Party emerged ahead with nearly all the votes counted in Sunday's parliamentary election.

The central electoral commission told state television the Communist Party was in front with 29.3 per cent of the vote after 92 per cent of ballots were counted by 8:30 a.m. (0630 GMT).

The vote for the Communists, who said they will increase state control of the economy and review privatisations, was widely seen as a 'no' to the hesitant market economic reforms of embattled President Petru Lucinschi, who had urged voters to reject "extremism."

Consultations were expected to begin Monday between the four leading vote-winning parties to try to form a coalition government.

Communist Party leader Vladimir Voronin has vowed to work with other parties in the parliament.

But his admiration for heavy-handed state intervention in the economy of former Soviet state Belarus would make him a difficult ally for the Nationalists and Centrists, who support varying degrees of market reform.

"In most districts, the Communist Party of Moldova is in first place," Anatol Puica, secretary of the former Soviet Republic's Central Electoral Commission, said in an interview broadcast live on state television.

He said voter turnout had been 68 per cent.

State television said the Nationalist Democratic convention had 19.9 per cent of the vote while the Centrist movement for a democratic and prosperous Moldova won 18 per cent.

The fourth party to cross a four-per cent barrier was the nationalist party of democratic forces with nine per cent.

Fifteen parties and 60 independent candidates competed for places in Moldova's 101-seat parliament. Votes from candidates who did not pass the barrier will be distributed among parties which did.

Unlike in some other former Soviet republics, the parliament holds real power in the country of 4.3 million situated between Romania and Ukraine.

Consultations are likely to get underway Monday between the four parties to create a coalition.

"I would like to see the convention form a coalition with the centrist," said a senior Moldovan banking source who worried for market reforms under a Communist government.

But commentators hold that the Communists will probably make a coalition pact with the centrist.

The Communist party was competing in a parliamentary election for the first time in Moldova — it had been banned by a previous nationalist government after the Moscow coup in 1991 and was only legalised in 1994.



U.S. President Bill Clinton (left), First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ghana President Jerry Rawlings meet a traditional leader after they arrived in the West African country (Reuters photo)

## H. Kong justice secretary to explain decision not to charge publisher

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong's justice secretary refused Monday to detail why she chose not to prosecute publishing tycoon Sally Aw Sian for conspiracy to defraud, citing legal principle and the rule of law.

Elsie Leung, appearing before the legal panel of the Provisional Legislative Council, repeatedly said she was unable to give details of why Aw Sian, chairwoman of Sing Tao Holdings Ltd., was not charged in the Hong Kong Standard case, despite being named a co-conspirator by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

The ICAC alleged that Aw Sian conspired with three executives of her Hong Kong Standard Newspapers Ltd. to defraud advertisers by inflating circulation figures.

Ambrose Fok, chairman of the legal panel, prefaced Ms. Leung's statement by

saying the Hong Kong Standard case had attracted wide media coverage and prompted speculation as to the way the case was handled.

Ms. Leung maintained total independence in making her decision and said she had followed proper prosecution guidelines in reaching her decision, including whether there was sufficient evidence to pursue a charge or that it was in the public interest.

"I understand that the public and the media would like me to be able to tell you the whole story," Ms. Leung, speaking in Cantonese, was translated as telling the legislators. "Other than that they would not be fully satisfied."

"But I must comply with the principles that, whether or not to launch a prosecution, I cannot disclose information nor can I disclose information or comment publicly on cases that are sub judice," Ms. Leung

said. "So therefore, I cannot tell you whether it is the public interest or whether it is because of a lack of evidence that I do not initiate prosecution against Ms. Sally Aw," she said.

Ms. Leung said she did not want to prejudice the trial of the three Hong Kong Standard employees, which has been adjourned until April 9, the three having been formally charged but no plea entered.

"Whatever explanation I give now will not satisfy the media and public completely," Ms. Leung said.

"But I hope that they will be patient and place reliance on our open and fair judicial system as, during the trial, the evidence will become open to the public," she said.

Ms. Leung said she hoped that "at the conclusion of the trial, it will be possible to make a statement on the case."

## Indonesia forest fires cause health fears after first death

JAKARTA (AFP) — Health fears heightened in Indonesia Monday as smoke from forest fires claimed a first victim and left several ailing.

The victim, who was not identified, died from a respiratory ailment caused by smog from the fires in the eastern province of East Kalimantan, the state Antara news agency reported.

More than 20,000 masks have been distributed to residents to ease the threat of the smoke, which has caused thousands of cases of eye and skin irritations and triggered asthma attacks, reports said.

"I know it is impractical to bring masks here but it's better for us to do so because they help us breathe," said one resident.

Health concerns are on the rise as efforts to extinguish the blazes are hampered by severe drought and failed attempts to induce rain by cloud seeding.

"The fires are big and very hot, making it difficult to get

close," said Sumadhi, installed last week as the country's new forestry minister.

"Getting within 10 meters of the fires is difficult when using traditional fire-fighting tools," he told reporters in Jakarta, referring to the hoes, rakes and buckets used against the spreading flames.

Poor weather and high winds were obstructing water bombing missions and often caused the planes to miss their targets.

Mr. Sumadhi said Indonesia was also under growing pressure from neighbours to control the blazes and prevent a repeat of last year's smog from fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra, which caused health problems in Malaysia and Singapore.

"There is a high risk with the amount of smoke in the air now," added an official of the health department in the East Kalimantan provincial capital of Samarinda.

"But at the moment we are more concerned with clean drinking water and disease," he

said, highlighting the threat from viral fever that causes diarrhoea and vomiting and is transmitted through unsanitary water.

Clean water sources have been drying up since rivers drawn on by the local water company fell to dangerously low levels because of the drought.

"Rain may be the only way we can get these fires under control," Umar added.

The province has had no rain since a brief downpour in December.

The fires have largely been blamed on timber and plantation companies and small farmers using slash and burn methods to clear land for new planting.

More than 127,000 hectares of forest have been destroyed this year, causing losses of 2.2 trillion rupiah (\$220,000 million), the Jakarta Post reported Monday citing figures from the official Environmental Impact Management Agency.

## Clinton arrives in Ghana at start of African tour

ACCRA (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton and his entourage arrived in Ghana Monday at the start of a high-profile 11-day tour of six African countries, which is the first by an American president in two decades.

Mr. Clinton landed at Accra's Kotoka International Airport on schedule at 7:45 a.m. (0745 GMT) to be met by his Ghanaian counterpart Jerry Rawlings, who wore his trademark batakari, a traditional sleeveless smock, and a host of other dignitaries.

The chief linguist of the Accra region, who represents the traditional chief of the Ga ethnic group, wearing a white robe, sang incantations and poured a libation of alcohol onto the ground to welcome the

U.S. visitors and to ensure they enjoyed a safe visit.

Security was tight at the airport as the two presidents greeted each other and their wives, Hillary Clinton and Nana Rawlings, were seen to embrace to the sound of the traditional drumming.

Dancers, who Mr. Clinton acknowledged with a V-for-victory sign, were also on hand at the airport, as were a guard of honour and a plethora of journalists from local and international media.

Many of these correspondents were eager for an official reaction from Mr. Clinton to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's abrupt decision to fire his entire cabinet, announced earlier Monday morning.

No U.S. reaction had been forthcoming by 9:00

a.m. (0900 GMT) and officials travelling with the president said they needed more information from the Russians before commenting.

After greeting a long line of Ghanaian ministers, other dignitaries and the diplomatic corps, a convoy of some 50 vehicles left the airport along a route lined with schoolchildren and other Accra residents waving the national flags of Ghana and the United States.

Many wore dresses and shirts made from a specially-printed fabric bearing photographic portraits of both presidents, whose images also appeared on dozens of billboards across the city.

Meanwhile, thousands of people poured into the capital's huge Independence

Square, where Mr. Clinton was later expected to deliver a speech.

According to an official schedule, both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Rawlings are to make their way to Osu Castle, the seat of Ghana's presidency, where they are to provide the press with photo opportunities with a walk through the gardens before starting talks on bilateral issues.

As well as Ghana, Mr. Clinton's tour will take in Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana and Senegal.

During his historic trip, which is not only the first tour in 20 years by a U.S. president but also the longest ever, Mr. Clinton will seek to convince African leaders of U.S. commitment to the continent's future.

## French students mount protests over National Front

PARIS (AFP) — Hundreds of Parisian students walked out of school Monday to protest against deals struck last week between the far right National Front and centre-right renegades.

The protest took place as voting began Monday, in key French regions, including the greater Paris area known as the Ile-de-France, with all eyes turned on the far right National Front.

The deals Friday between centre-right incumbents and the extremist party have cast a pall over France, with analysts forecasting a rightwing split and commentators and politicians describing the unprecedented alliances with the pariah party as a turning-point in the country's post-war political history.

Several hundred secondary school students were massing around the Luxembourg Gardens in the Latin Quarter waving banners to "denounce the rightwing-National Front accords" and "stop any such shame falling on the Ile-de-France."

The Front led by Jean-Marie Le Pen wants foreigners sent home and "national preference", or French-first policies, adopted in all domains. It blames the country's high unemployment and rising urban crime rates on the presence of foreigners.

## Far-right deals fuel leftist gains in French poll

PARIS (R) — France's governing left scored significant gains in Sunday's local elections as voters punished opposition parties for cutting deals with the far-right National Front in last week's regional polls, analysts said Monday.

According to final results released by the interior ministry, 11 of mainland France's 95 departments fell to France's left-wing ruling coalition of Socialists, Communists and Greens in Sunday's cantonal elections.

That left 64 departments in the hands of the mainstream right and 31 in the hands of the left, as only half of France's 1,958 cantons are up for election every three years.

"Undeniably, the left has gained and the national Front has solidified its position. Voters were very disturbed by the events of last week," Claude

Goasguen, leader of the centre-right Union for French Democracy (UDF), told radio Monte Carlo.

An Ipsos poll for the French daily Liberation, conducted Saturday, found that 64 per cent of voters wanted the right to refuse to cut deals for power with the National Front.

But the poll also found that 45 per cent believed the right would one day govern France with National Front ministers in its cabinet, the poll found.

The xenophobic National Front, led by fiery orator Jean-Marie Le Pen, won control of three cantons though it failed to win any departments. It had held no cantons going into this year's poll.

The Front won 15.5 per cent of the vote in the regional polls which were held in a single round of proportional voting.

As neither the left nor the right won an absolute

majority in nearly all of mainland France's 22 regions, the Front's score put it in position to play king-maker in the selection of regional presidents, chosen by the newly elected regional councillors in voting which began Friday.

The Front helped conservatives win in five regions last Friday. Four more regions were due to choose their new chairmen Monday in contests that threaten to split the moderate right.

Among the winners Sunday was Jean-Francois Mancel, the former RPR secretary-general expelled from the Gaullist party last week for advocating cooperation with the shunned front. He easily carried his department of Oise.

Environment Minister Dominique Voynet won in her Jura department but junior Education Minister Segolene Royal lost in Deux-Sevres.

## 13 ex-soldiers charged in murder of Philippines leftist labour leader

MANILA (AFP) — Thirteen former soldiers were charged with murder Monday in connection with the 1986 killing of a Philippines leftist labour leader, court officials said.

The defendants included two former colonels and soldiers belonging to a military clique that played a key role in the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and subsequent coup attempts against his successor, Corazon Aquino.

State prosecutors said they had found enough evidence to file the charges in court. No bail was recommended.

Two other military officers and a journalist were excluded from the charges for lack of evidence.

The double murder charges were tied to the killings of trade union leader Rolando Olalia and his driver, Leonor Alay-Ay, whose mutilated bodies were found outside Manila in November 1986.

"As established by the evidence, the respondents had their individual roles to perform from the planning, surveillance to abduction and subsequent killing of Olalia and Alay-Ay," the prosecutors said.

Human rights activists have said the killings were part of a 1986 plot to overthrow Ms. Aquino shortly after a bloodless uprising toppled Mr. Marcos. She had had a falling out with the junior officers who helped topple the dictator.

The filing of the charges followed the signing of a human rights accord between the Philippine government and communist guerrillas last week in the Netherlands which includes compensation for victims of human rights abuses during the Marcos rule.

The agreement on human rights is the first of four pacts that could lead to a final peace agreement to end a 29-year-long Communist rebellion.

## Prosecution wants expanded probe of South Korea's North Wind scandal

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's chief prosecutor Monday called for an expanded investigation into allegations of misuse of secret contacts with North Korea after the attempted suicide here of former intelligence chief Kwon Young-Hae.

"Politicians, both ruling and opposition, should be summoned and face legal action if they are found to have committed crimes," Prosecutor General Kim Tae-Jung told journalists.

"A full probe into the scandal must be carried out under any circumstances and must cover both alleged connections between the ANSP and North Korea, and between North Korea and politicians. Neither can be tolerated."

"We have to delve into the truth behind the scandal to prevent the recurrence of such activities as using North Korea

for political purposes," he said. The prosecutor general's statement was widely seen here as having the blessing of President Kim Dae-Jung. It was expected to cool an intensifying battle between the opposition and Mr. Kim's ruling camp over "Operation North Wind."

"North Wind" is the code-name of several alleged plots hatched during past elections by the ANSP (the Agency for National Security Planning) with the cooperation of North Korea to cement the ruling party's grip on power in Seoul.

One, during the runup to the Dec. 18 presidential elections, painted Mr. Kim as a leftist to try to prevent him taking power. Earlier Monday, the former ANSP head, who is recovering in hospital after slashing his stomach open in a suicide attempt during a prosecution

interrogation, issued a statement through his lawyers saying he had known of the plot against the president.

"It was my responsibility that I received a plan... and I let it go ahead," Mr. Kwon said referring to the ANSP's payment of \$200,000 to stage fake allegations against the then presidential contender.

The former intelligence chief had "already clarified his position to prosecutors, and he had attempted suicide to avoid any misunderstanding of the controversy," the lawyers said.

Mr. Kwon, 60, also confirmed "there had been no improper treatment during the prosecutors' investigation, and he expressed his wish that the scandal would not escalate into a major political issue," the lawyers said.

## Official inquiry starts on second Philippines aviation disaster

MANILA (AFP) — Aviation officials Monday began an inquiry into a Philippine Airlines (PAL) Airbus jet which overshot a runway in the central Philippines killing three people and injuring 114.

The airline said in a statement Monday it would airlift "five injured passengers requiring special treatment" to Manila, including one Malaysian.

The cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder of the Airbus A320 were now with PAL but would be "downloaded and processed in France," Air Transportation Office (ATO) chief Carlos Tanega said in a report to President Fidel Ramos.

Members of the French safety investigation board and safety experts from

Airbus, based in Toulouse, France, will arrive Tuesday "to help in the ATO-led investigation," a presidential palace statement said.

"The ATO is spearheading the investigation into the incident," a PAL statement said.

PAL Flight 137 with 121 passengers and six crew aboard overshot the runway and plowed into a slum area as was landing at night at Bacolod airport on the island of Negros, killing three people on the ground and leaving 114 people injured.

It was the second major plane accident in the Philippines in six weeks after a Cebu Pacific Air DC-9 jet hit a mountain in the south on Feb. 2 killing all 104 people on board in the country's worst air disaster.

It was not clear how many

of the 114 people injured from the PAL flight were from the ground. A PAL statement said earlier that most of the injured "were released after being found to be in good condition" while the others were sent to hospitals for treatment mostly for minor bruises.

The palace statement said that Flight 137 had overshot the runway by about 200 metres while landing at 7:41 p.m. (1141 GMT).

Mr. Tanega who was at the scene hours after the crash, told Mr. Ramos that moments before the accident rescue workers at the airport had "noticed the plane because it was cruising at an abnormally high speed."

However, "there is no need to ground the (remaining PAL) planes," Airline officials have stressed the plane

was new and in good condition.

Senior Vice President for sales Avelino Zapanta told a local radio station Monday the plane was one of four new Airbus 320s which PAL obtained last year to replace Boeing 737s on domestic routes. The airline has ordered 12 Airbus in all.

A top senator, meanwhile, questioned the capability of the Bacolod airport to handle "heavy Jumbo jets" such as an Airbus A320.

"We're not sure if it can handle an Airbus A320, especially at night," Senator Ernesto Herrera said in a statement.

He added "there are only three to five international class airports which can more or less safely take in night landings by medium-sized jets," noting he did not remember seeing Bacolod

on that list.

Meanwhile one of the injured passengers, a newly wed woman, was paralysed in the crash, a doctor attending to some of the injured passengers said.

"She had a fracture of the neck and she is paralysed," Doctor Patricio Tan told AFP in a phone interview from a Bacolod hospital.

She is reportedly among the five being brought to Manila.

He added that the Airbus pilot had received "extensive head wounds and a broken ankle after being pinned to the cockpit for a long time," but stressed that all the passengers and crew were "alive and in safe conditions."

Officials identified one of the dead as the manager of a nightclub which was mowed down by the jet.



By Rami G. Khouri

## View from Fourth Circle

# Palestine's merciless transition from national cause to vegetable market

THE ARAB-ISRAELI conflict is passing through another of those moments that are defined by an odd combination of hope and despair. Intense diplomatic efforts by scores of regional and international actors to re-start the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian-Lebanese peace talks are a sign of hope — but this is deflated by the despairing reality that the fuss is mostly about whether Israel's next redeployment from the occupied West Bank would be a maximum of ten per cent of the land (as Israel wants) or the 13 per cent that the United States seems ready to suggest. These limited Israeli redeployments are being negotiated essentially between the United States and Israel, with the Palestinian, Arab, European, United Nations and other international perspectives playing no significant role.

The imbalance of power in favour of Israel puts ever more pressure on the Palestinians to submit to Israeli dictates on land, security, settlements, and other such basic issues of the conflict. The Palestinians in turn exhibit a peculiar capacity to accept every new humiliation and limitation that is imposed on them by Israel. This strikes me as not just puzzling, but rather important, and worthy of greater analysis in order to understand why it is happening.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) headed by Yasser Arafat hopes and pleads for American initiatives and "pressure" on Israel to withdraw from another 10-13 per cent of the occupied West Bank. The Israeli government wants only a 5-10 per cent withdrawal, arguing that anything more would endanger Israeli security, especially the security and interests of the Jewish settlers throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. The whole world — except for the United States, Israel and Micronesia — has just voted at the United Nations General Assembly for a resolution that brands those Israeli settlements and colonies in the occupied territories as illegal.

More striking than all this, though, is that a strong majority of Palestinians still supports the Oslo peace process, which provides the framework for the present negotiations. The latest poll in early March, by the Nablus-based Centre for Palestine Research and Studies, showed that some 67 per cent of Palestinians support the Oslo peace process, and 29 per cent oppose it. Moreover,

support for Yasser Arafat's Fateh political group is also rising in the short term, commanding 46 per cent support among those surveyed this month, as opposed to an average of around 40 per cent throughout the previous year.

How do we reconcile the continuing political marginalisation of the PNA with the strong and even rising support for its peace policies among its own people in Palestine? There is only one answer that makes any sense to me: the Palestinian issue is slowly but steadily becoming one of purely local and material dimensions, and the PNA's policies appear to respond to the demands of these new dimensions. The Palestine issue is shedding its traditional dimensions as part of the Middle Eastern anti-colonial struggle that once spanned centuries and states. Most Palestinians in Palestine support the Oslo process and Arafat's policies because those policies have brought small, incremental yet meaningful benefits to their everyday lives. And as more Palestinians work in the Israeli economy, the Palestinian support for Oslo and Arafat will increase commensurately.

The majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza now get on with their daily lives without significant contact with Israelis. They put up with occasional petty humiliations that recall the worst of the apartheid era regulations in South Africa — such as security zones, land confiscations, and travel and residence permits that regulate where Palestinians can and cannot live and work in their own country. Nevertheless most Palestinians want the Oslo process to continue because these contacts with Israelis are decreasing with every Israeli redeployment. For most Palestinians in Palestine, the difference between a 13 per cent, a ten per cent, or a seven per cent Israeli redeployment is meaningful, even substantial.

We are witnessing a bitter and merciless historical transition from Palestine as a national Arab cause to Palestine as a local vegetable and labour market. The Arab World is dominated by ideological criticism and personal ridicule of Arafat and the PNA. These sentiments are offset within Palestine by a narrow, more pragmatic focus on simple material and emotional gains that the majority of Palestinians have yearned for during the past half a century — to live a relatively normal life in one's own society, governed by one's own people, working for the devel-

opment of one's own community. Probably the critical element in this equation is the novel sense of hope among Palestinians living in the PNA-governed areas — a sense that they can plan and work for their own future, being, that they can express their political and cultural identity in freedom, that they know where their children will grow up, which school they will attend, which languages they will speak.

If in the short term this means getting a security pass from an Israeli office to travel from one Palestinian town to another, this is seen today as a manageable price for most Palestinians to pay. Not permanently acceptable, but manageable for the moment. The measure of success or failure for the Palestinians inside Palestine has changed. Some will see this as a sign of maturity, patience, and wisdom, others as a sign of defeat, helplessness and desperation. It is a combination of both, and it will continue — because this is the only policy in the lifetime of most Palestinians that has ever brought them tangible gains in Palestine. As the lives of most Palestinians in Palestine improve, the credit for these gains translates into political support for the PNA, which increases its support by the targeted use of its funds to hire tens of thousands of workers in its expanding bureaucracy.

Despite the gross imbalance of power on the ground between Israelis and Arabs, for the reasons mentioned above the PNA will continue to negotiate according to the current Israeli- and American-made ground rules. This round of intensive diplomacy will lead to another awkward compromise that once again gives the Israelis slightly more than the Palestinians — probably an 8-10 per cent Israeli redeployment from the West Bank. This will be linked to further Palestinian acceptance of humiliating conditions set by Israel and accepted by the U.S., such as permanent Israeli control over land and water in occupied Palestinian lands, expansion of settlements in Jerusalem, more stringent security checks, and greater internal Palestinian controls on political groups such as Hamas.

If imperial-like Israeli and American behavior in this respect is so humiliating to Palestinians, why does a majority of Palestinians accept and support this process? Something is happening among Palestinians inside Palestine that we need to better understand.

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## Instruments of death in our midst

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD child was killed recently by a land mine in the Adassia area not too far from Amman. It was also confirmed that four others have lost their lives in the past due to anti-personnel mines left inadvertently by the army in the same location. What adds insult to injury is the disclosure that there still remains several undetectable land mines there without warning signs or barbed wire to keep people out of the danger zone. Some of these mines may have been washed away from their original sites by heavy rain. Still the deaths suggests that the issue of land mines in the country is not being handled with enough attention or care to save lives. The mines in the Adassia area and other parts of the country facing the Jordan Valley were deployed by the Armed Forces in the past to defend the country from an Israeli incursion. In the wake of the 1994 peace treaty with Israel the threat of an armed attack on the Kingdom has been reduced to manageable proportions.

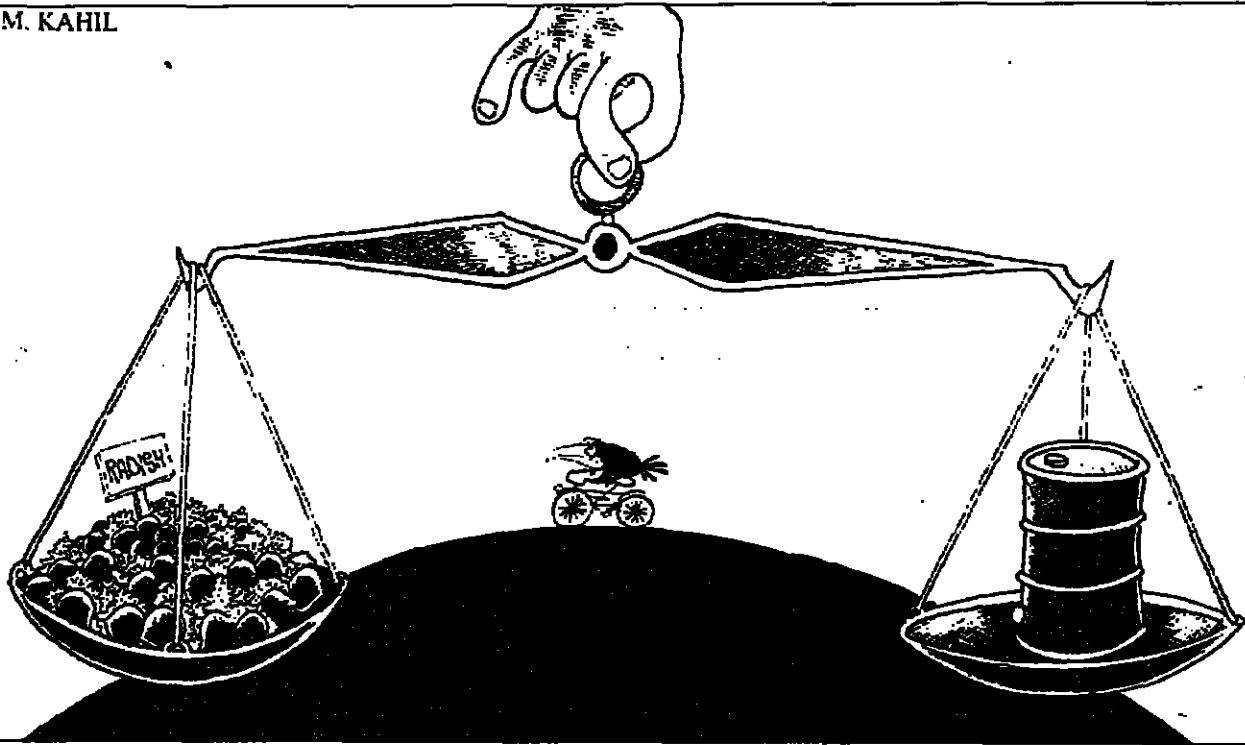
There is also information that land mines are still deployed all along the borders to combat drug trafficking and prevent illegal entry to the country. This dependence on anti-personnel mines for defending the Kingdom, however, runs counter to the Ottawa Treaty on land mines which we have supported in principle but not signed until this day. In the absence of compelling reasons to rely on anti-personnel mines even along our long frontiers, Jordan must start developing alternatives to protect our borders from infiltrators and smugglers. Even if we need to maintain our vigilance along our borders for the time being, there is no excuse whatsoever for keeping these active explosives within the heartland of the country till this late hour. Better still, that all such mines must be sought and destroyed as a matter of highest priority. No effort must be spared to locate these indiscriminate instruments of death amongst us and destroy them before they kill more unsuspecting innocent people.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Majd's Fahed Rimawi said Monday it is a shame for the Arabs and the Palestinians to remain silent about Ariel Sharon's open threats against Khaled Misha'al who was the victim of an abortive Israeli attempt on his life last year. He urged Hamas, the resistance group to which Misha'al belongs, to take immediate action and assassinate Sharon before he can hatch another conspiracy to kill Hamas leaders. Mere threats and promises from Hamas to retaliate against Sharon's previous crimes which he conducted against the Palestinians during Israel's invasion of Lebanon and his conspiracies against Palestinian leaders are not enough and Hamas should take matters seriously and carry out retaliatory action against Sharon, stressed the writer. He said if Hamas delays action against Sharon, it would be granting him further time and more opportunities to carry out an assassination attempt against Misha'al. What is wanted from Hamas, said the writer, is to carry out its attacks on all Israeli embassies and interests not only inside the occupied Arab lands but also anywhere else around the world.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Marwan Hazine addressed the current flurry of activities in the Middle East, with many foreign dignitaries visiting the Arab capitals and Israel to try to revive the peace process. Despite the numerous visits to the region by European and American envoys and foreign ministers, and even presidents and government leaders, no solutions to the region's problems have been found and no serious action has yet been taken on the part of the Europeans to pressure Israel into respecting U.N. resolutions, according to the writer. He said the visitors who meet Middle Eastern leaders and people must have discovered the ills and must have realised the source of obstacles to a lasting settlement, but to date their governments have failed to exercise any form of pressure to ensure the implementation of the Security Council resolutions. He said it has no doubt become clear to the Europeans and the Americans that it is the Arabs who are in need of security and not Israel, and that it is the Arabs who are exercising flexibility and showing all readiness for peace and security.

M. KAHIL



## Gulf-state no-shows

By Aziz Abu-Hamad

RIYADH — Many Americans are puzzled by the failure of U.S. allies in the Gulf area to endorse this country's current policy towards Iraq. After all, a key aim of that policy is to ensure the security of those states. Why have the Gulf states distanced themselves this time?

The reasons are many and complex. Key among them are fear of the destabilising potential of military action and doubts about its effectiveness or about the wisdom of maintaining blanket, untargeted sanctions.

While they share U.S. goals regarding Iraq, most in the Gulf believe that U.S. policy to achieve them has become seriously flawed. Military action is opposed as both ineffective and destabilising to Iraq's neighbours. Nor is there support for maintaining economic sanctions, which have wreaked havoc on millions of Iraqi civilians without weakening President Saddam Hussein or improving compliance with U.N. resolutions.

The United Nations' recent agreement with Iraq has spared it unnecessary destruction, but it also saved U.S. Gulf allies from a potentially disastrous backlash from their own citizens. An attack on Iraq would have destabilised the region and further eroded U.S. influence, while doing little or nothing to control the spread of weapons of mass destruction or get rid of Saddam Hussein.

We should recall that Desert Storm inadvertently created a significant threat to the Saudi royal family. Islamist opponents who objected to an increased U.S. presence became vocal for the first time then. The key leaders of this opposition movement are now in prison or exile, but the movement is far from being subdued.

Because of the potentially destabilising effects of U.S. Iraq policy on domestic politics, the United States

no longer can count on unquestioning support from Saudi Arabia or other Gulf allies. As Crown Prince Abdullah quietly assumes the reins of power in Saudi Arabia, he is distancing the kingdom from Washington's current policy. Instead of Washington, he consulted Damascus and Cairo and then pushed for the adoption of a middle-of-the-road position in the December summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The other Gulf leaders are similarly asserting their independence: during the same summit, Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates counselled a drastic rupture with Washington over Iraq.

Except for Kuwait, all Gulf states have made political or humanitarian gestures towards Iraq, which has taken advantage of the unpopularity of U.S. policy by reestablishing severed links with its neighbours. During the latest standoff, Syria received an Iraqi foreign minister for the first time in 17 years, and Iraqi envoys toured the region, garnering sympathy if not support.

The U.S. failure to move the Middle East peace process along fuels scepticism about U.S. moral leadership. Similarly, when the conflict recently appeared to be a unilateral U.S. confrontation with Iraq, Saddam's many critics in the region kept a low profile lest they appear supportive of foreign hegemony. Most Iraqi opposition groups publicly opposed U.S. threats of military strikes. Especially divisive is a possibility advanced by some U.S. officials to sidestep the Security Council and "go it alone." Such a posture weakens the case against Saddam Hussein, whose own flouting of international law is the rationale for military threats.

With military confrontation averted for the time, a new policy is needed to end the cycle of military standoffs and achieve the goals set by U.N. resolutions. A revamped Iraq policy should take into full account the inter-

ests and opinions of the Gulf states and set clear objectives and work to achieve them collectively in accordance with international norms. It should include more effective ways to ensure compliance with U.N. resolutions, a recalibration of the sanctions and new emphasis on democracy and human rights in Iraq.

For the immediate matter of weapons of mass destruction, the authority to control them rests with the Security Council, not individual states. It is important to remember that U.N. weapons inspectors have achieved more results than any military action has or could.

Dim as they may seem, prospects for human rights and democratic change in Iraq should be pursued. Human rights provisions in Security Council resolution 688 could be given force by dispatching human rights monitors to Iraq on fact-finding missions. A democratic culture in Iraq could be cultivated by engaging — instead of isolating — Iraqi academics, scientists, intellectuals and non-governmental groups.

Assassinations and similar actions are not likely to bring down the Iraqi government. Barring a spontaneous change, a lawful and effective way to deal with the current leadership is to indict (before an independent international tribunal) those against whom there is credible evidence of massive human rights violations, such as the mass slaughter of Kurds.

The current policy of economic sanctions combined with military threats has mainly harmed Iraqi civilians without weakening Saddam's hold on power. Moreover, it has threatened the stability of U.S. allies and dramatically diminished the goodwill the United States enjoyed during Desert Storm.

The writer is a Saudi lawyer and economist. The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

## LETTERS

### No less painful

To the editor:

REGARDING THE letter to the editor (Jordan Times, March 21, 1998) written by Roey Gilad, the spokesman of the Israeli Embassy in Amman, please let me state the following facts.

It is true that Nazism was "an abhorrent beastly attempt by one nation," but it is totally untrue to say that it was "to annihilate one nation" meaning the Jews. The victims of Nazism amounted to about 50 million people, 20 million of whom were Soviets.

It is entirely unjust and unfair to continue ignoring the sufferings and pains of other peoples as if they were not human beings.

The sufferings and miseries of the Palestinian people at the hands of the Israelis are no less than the sufferings and pains caused by the Nazis. The Palestinians have nothing to do whatsoever with the crimes of the Nazis, and the Israelis must understand that the Israeli occupation is the source and cause of all evils, miseries and disasters.

Because of the arrogance of power the Israelis think that they can deceive the whole world the whole time. History teaches us that empires of evil are doomed to be defeated and the people's freedom fighting will end in victory.

Ahmad Al Shafe'i   
 Amman

### Objection to sacking

To the editor:

AS AN American academic teaching in Jordan and recipient of two Fulbright grants, (three years in Syria and one year in Bahrain), I wish to support the Fulbright programme officer in Amman, Aida Dabbas, who has been summarily dismissed from her position with Fulbright for her political activities. I urge the Board of Directors to reconsider and rescind this unfortunate decision.

I disagree with the position of the Binational Fulbright Commission's executive director that Fulbright grantees "would probably" be concerned to learn that the Fulbright programme officer was "behaving in this way," as he put it in the memorandum of dismissal.

First of all I think it is inappropriate for the executive director to make such an assumption: as a former Fulbright grantee, I can say it is inspiring to know that people in responsible positions in the Fulbright administration are not robots but are willing to commit themselves actively and responsibly to human rights, even when it means criticising U.S. foreign policy.

There is in the executive director's view an implied belief that employees of American organisations or institutions should forego their right to criticise U.S. foreign policy, should not "rock the boat," so to speak. I know many people in such positions who are intimidated by this silent assumption and fear they would risk their jobs if they dared to express their true convictions. As Ms. Dabbas points out, Senator Fulbright was himself prominent in the best tradition of political dissent.

It takes courage to speak out, and I strongly object to just such courageous people being sacked for their courage: it is a great loss to the Fulbright programme but it is an even more tragic loss for American democracy in the view of the rest of the world. If we, as U.S. citizens, can't speak out in defense of the oppressed who are victims of the policies of our own government, who can?

Dr. A. Clare Brandabur   
 English Department   
 Yarmouk University   
 Irbid



صحيفة العرب في القرن الحادي والعشرين



الناس السويون  
متشككون بجنسية  
المتنصحين  
الاسرائيليين من  
جنوب لبنان

عمان - الأبريل العدد 211 السنة الأولى - 25 ذو القعدة 1418 هـ الإصدار 1998/23

العربية الأحرار الإلكترونية الثلاثة الأوجه الكمبيوتر الإنترنت



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The Al Arab Al Yawm, Jordan's youngest Arabic daily, web site

## Arabic dailies push ahead on their Internet sites

By Ahmed Naser  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian newspapers' web experience has barely started to mature two years after the Kingdom's first local Arabic daily launched on the Internet, experts say.

The majority of written Arabic media on the Internet is still presented in the form of graphic images that take an average of 30 seconds to download, while Latin-based, 26 character-set media needs seconds to view.

Many are questioning why transmit Arabic articles as slow downloading images instead of fast loading text?

Ihsan Bustami, editor of the Al Ra'i Internet edition, the first daily to go on-line, said the mass-circulation newspaper would lose Internet readership if its articles are presented in text format.

Sakhr, an Arabic-language software development house, was among the first to try and Arabise the Internet, launching the Sindbad plugin, a small assisting application, for Latin-based browsers last year through Byte magazine.

Though the plugin's popularity did not take off as expected, cyber editors have not been discouraged from launching text editions.

Jordan's youngest daily, Al Arab Al Yawm, is preparing to launch a searchable digital archive to appear on the Internet by the end of the year and the transmission of its content in text format before September.

The daily, which launched its web site a month ago, currently presents its content as images, added Basel Abu Saif, its information systems manager.

Al Arab Al Yawm available at [www.alarab-alyawm.com.jo](http://www.alarab-alyawm.com.jo) and born during the electronic "Age of Aquarius," has

had all its media digitally archived since its first edition hit newspaper stands on May 17.

However, it has set a limit of three articles to each section of its web edition to avoid hurting the circulation of its international edition launched in New York in February, he added.

"Items on the web site

"Items on the web site are a sort of appetiser to tell people abroad what we have in the print edition,"

Basel Abu Saif, information systems manager, Al Arab Al Yawm

are a sort of appetiser to tell people abroad what we have in the print edition," added Mr. Saif.

With an eye on surfers limited attention spans of a maximum 15 seconds, Suhail Sabah, director of Ad Dustour's Internet Department, explained that Jordan's oldest daily — available at [www.adustour.com](http://www.adustour.com) — only presented three to four articles so as not to burden cyber surfers with information overload.

On the other hand, Al Rai's web site at [www.accessme.com/alrai](http://www.accessme.com/alrai), presents all of its content in the form of whole pages or singular articles. A whole page can take an average of 25 seconds to download.

Though Al Rai and Al Arab Al Yawm have quasi-archives that present seven editions a

week, "technical impediments," have prevented Ad Dustour from doing so, said Mr. Sabah.

However, he said Ad Dustour planned to make its written content available in text format within the coming few weeks.

"Arab Internet users are passing through a transitory period which we are taking into account as we revamp our Internet site."

In the first stage, Ad Dustour will have two sites: one displaying its content as text and another "mirroring" the paper's content in the form of images.

"With two sites, one that presents the content in images and another that presents it in text... surfers will have two viewing choices," said Mr. Sabah.

The paper also plans to make all its content available in the future when it launches its text edition.

Al Rai, which launched its print edition on June 2, 1971, has no "immediate" plans to launch a text edition, Mr. Bustami said.

Unlike the two older dailies — in which the government holds a major stake — the private-run Al Arab Al Yawm, has its own lease-line and powerful Internet server enabling fast browsing speeds of its site.

Al Rai's web site is hosted by Access and Ad Dustour's by Arabia On-Line.

Mr. Bustami and Mr. Sabah declined to say whether they planned to launch similar facilities.

As the number of Jordan's Internet sites mushroom, entities that are not available through the Internet "do not exist," experts warn. Those with longer attention spans will gradually put off surfing slow down-loading sites.

"Therefore, if something is not a 'click away' why bother," warned one.

## Where to go this weekend

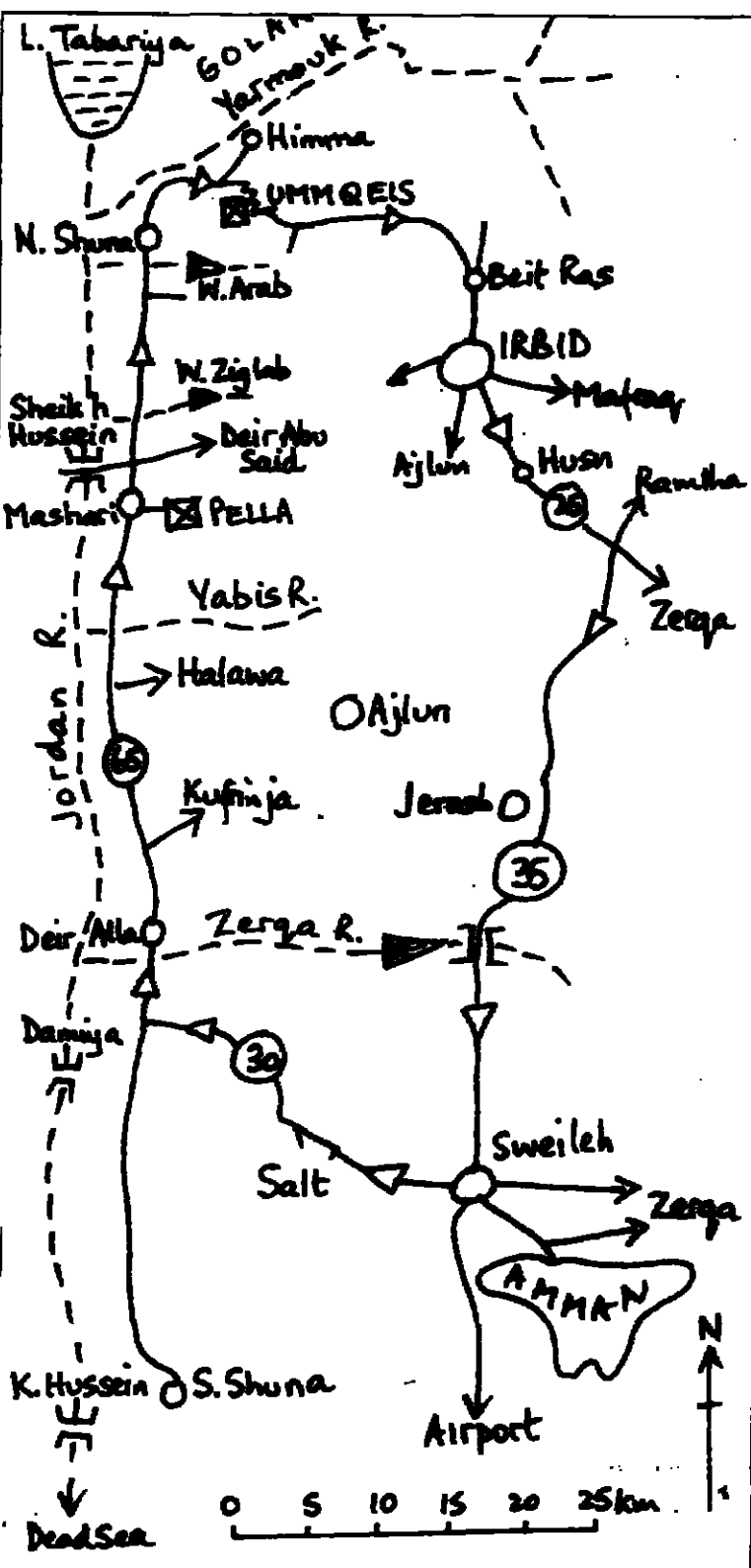
# Catch the spring early in the northern Jordan Valley

By Richard Tanner  
Special to the Jordan Times

TAKE THE main road northwest, through Sweileh and by-passing Salt, for the Jordan Rift Valley. As Arabia moves northward, so the land between it and Palestine has sunk, causing the rift to drop into the valley, pausing at the sea-level viewpoint, and then to the floor of the lowest valley on earth. Turn right at the bottom, cross the Zarqa River, pass through Deir Alla to the 30-metre mound at the north side. Climb this "tell," above layer upon layer of collapsed mud-brick buildings representing life here from 1600 to 400 B.C. Halfway through that period, Jacob may have rested here at Succoth, after wrestling with the angel further up the Zarqa or Jabbok valley (Genesis 32).

Continue north through rich farmlands growing several crops a year with water from the E. Ghor Canal which criss-crosses the road. Built in the 1950s to tap surplus water from the Yarmouk River, the canal and the efficient irrigation practices of local farmers have transformed this semi-desert valley into Jordan's premier fruit and vegetable area. Look out for swathes of yellow Crown Daisies and other spring flowers between mid-February and April.

Cross Wadi Yabis, Elijah's Brook Cherith perhaps (I Kings 17), pass many more tells including Sa'idieh which produced such treasures, before turning right at the far end of Mashari for Pella, named after Alexander the Great's birthplace. Climbing the hill and through Tabaqat Fahl, you pass the first of three churches (LHS), the main tell (RHS) now fenced off to reduce robbery, and on up to the resthouse for views down onto the site. Grey-brown in summer, green in winter and multi-coloured in spring, Pella has evidence of a million years of human activity. The main tell has everything from Stone Age through Islamic periods, as you'd expect from a sheltered site, easily defended, next to springs, with forested hills behind and lying at an important crossroads. Stroll down to the Civic Centre below, with its Byzantine church built atop a Roman hammam probably from the odeon's missing stones. If you're energetic, climb El Hush opposite for the Hellenistic fortress and panoramic views. Pella, one of the Decapolis cities, became a refuge for early Christians escaping their purge from Jerusalem (67AD), had a major rebuilding 400 years later and again after the Persian destruction (614 AD) and Islamic success



at the Battle of Fahl (635 AD) commemorated in the Mamluke mosque on the tell. The Byzantine-Umayyad town declined fast after the 747 AD earthquake and the Abbasid transfer of power from Damascus to Baghdad, leaving the site unoccupied for the first time in 3000 years, apart from a small Abbasid town to the north-east and the ubiquitous bedouin encampments.

For more details, see Rami

Khouri, "Pella," Al Kutba Guide 1990. And "Pella" video, 'available' through Friends of Archaeology.

Back down to the main road and right, possibly with diversions right into the foothills for either the older Ziglab or larger (20MCM) Wadi Araba Dam, each storing winter floodwater for summer irrigation in the valley, and worthy of further exploration. Turn right in N. Shouneh — left would strand

you in that triangle of land, leased by the Israelis, where the Yarmouk meets Jordan River — and enter the spectacular Yarmouk gorge. Look out for the broken pan of the railway bridge, blown not by T.E. Lawrence and Emir Feisal in the winter of 1917 but in a later Arab-Israeli conflict, cutting the branch of the Hijaz Railway from Deraa through Nazareth to Haifa and the Mediterranean. You're nearing the kilometre-long tunnel where the tapping of the Yarmouk for the E. Ghor Canal begins. Further up, Muslim forces inflicted a crushing defeat on the Byzantine army on August 20, 636, allowing Umayyad sovereignty till 750 A.D.

On your left is Himma, Roman Hammath Gader, sub-tropical in this sheltered valley still below sea-level, its public pools filled with thermal water. Much nicer is the private Mukheibeh pool, a natural jacuzzi fed by hot, bubbling spring water, steaming in winter. As you swim amongst the basalt capitals, it's easy to imagine luxurious life as lived by rich Romans. Count your blessings that you're saved their walk up to Gadara, 600 metres higher up. You reach this second Decapolis city by a zigzag road to arrive in Umm Qais.

Walk through the abandoned Circassian black stone town for the monumental buildings also in basalt. Stop by the museum for a guide who'll show you the underground water tunnels and lend you a key to the mausoleum on the Decumanus leading west. On the way there, visit the octagonal church (12) and the complete theatre (11), before viewing Lake Tabariya (Sea of Galilee) and the Golan Heights from the resthouse terrace. Return via the stoneless North Theatre (10) to find the Roman tomb-caverns (2,3) one converted into machine-gun nest.

For more details, see Thomas Weber, "Umm Qais," Al Kutba Guide, 1989.

Return towards Amman across the Northern (Gilead) Highlands, through Beit Ras — Capitolias, Number 3 — Irbid and Husn, which may be Dion, Decapolis Number 4, where you can refresh yourself at Rewaq al-Husn under the great tell. Continuing south, highway 35 bypasses Jerash — Gerasa, Decapolis 5 — to cross the Zarqa River and climb through Sweileh for Philadelphia, Decapolis 6, now reverted to its Aramaic name, Amman.

Extra information can be obtained from Rami Khouri, "Antiquities of the Jordan Valley," Al Kutba, 1988.

## Netanyahu readies for showdown with Clinton over peace proposal

(Continued from page 1)

negotiations, an Israeli newspaper reported Monday.

The Haaretz newspaper said Washington offered to form the committee with the Palestinians in exchange for dropping its oft-repeated demand for a freeze in Jewish settlement building from the emerging peace initiative. It would be the first time the United States sets up a joint committee with the Palestinians to monitor Israeli activity and the Haaretz called the move "an extraordinary development in the Middle East peace process."

The U.S. plan, expected to be announced following a visit here later this week by U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross, centres on a demand that Israel with-

draw from an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank in exchange for Palestinian action against anti-Israeli activists.

The joint U.S.-Palestinian committee would monitor the extent of settlement activity and land confiscations, including Arab east Jerusalem, to ensure Israel is honouring the agreement, the newspaper said.

Meanwhile, Palestinian officials said Monday they had serious misgivings about a new U.S. peace initiative, but unlike Israel did not reject it outright.

Israel appeared to be headed for a showdown with the United States, perhaps one as serious as in early 1990s when the U.S. government withheld \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees over Israel's

refusal to stop expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A senior Israeli official was quoted Monday as threatening to use Israel's allies in the U.S. Congress to thwart any move by U.S. President Bill Clinton to go public with a new Mideast peace plan.

The unnamed official told Israel Radio that Mr. Clinton's intention to call publicly on Israel to withdraw from an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank would unleash the Jewish state's formidable lobbying machine.

"If the Clinton administration goes public with a plan calling for a withdrawal of this scope, we will reject it outright and call on our friends in Congress" and Jewish-American groups to pressure the

government, the official said.

He added however that if the United States presents its confidence-building proposals as simple "suggestions" for breaking the year-long deadlock in the peace process, the government here would react with flexibility.

A public opinion poll released Monday showed that 49 per cent of the Jewish public favours the U.S. proposal, while 42 per cent oppose it.

Palestinian officials said Monday that the U.S. proposal fell short of expectations because it allowed Israel to scrap one of three phases of a troop pullback to which it had committed itself in a U.S.-backed agreement last year.

"We welcome any U.S. initiative that will push

the peace process forward, but our position is that any initiative has to include three phases of redeployment," said Ahmed Abdul Rahman, the secretary general of the Palestinian Cabinet.

Palestinian Cabinet minister Hanan Ashrawi said a U.S. initiative should hold Israel to agreements already signed.

"The Palestinians have major problems with American ideas because they adopt the Israeli views," Ms. Ashrawi told The Associated Press. "We insist on three stages of redeployment." However, Palestinian officials were careful not to reject the American plan outright. The Palestinians believe that they can only win Israeli concessions through U.S. intervention.

## Cyprus to renounce missiles if settlement is achieved

(Continued from page 1)

The envoy, who was in Athens Monday, discussed Denktash's recognition demand with Greek Foreign Minister Yannis Kranidiotis before heading to Ankara.

Mr. Cordovez said he will discuss Denktash's position with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and that the U.N. Security Council

should take up the matter as the Turkish-Cypriot leader insists on changing the status of the interlocutors to the intercommunal negotiations sponsored by the United Nations.

Mr. Kranidiotis said "we cannot go beyond U.N. resolutions which are for a bi-zonal bi-communal state in Cyprus."

The TRNC proclaimed independence in 1983 but is

recognised only by Turkey, which has 30,000 soldiers stationed in the north.

Cyprus's announcement in January 1996 that it had purchased S-300 ground-to-air missiles infuriated Turkey, which is 64 kilometres north of the island and has threatened to destroy the weapons if they are deployed here.

## Israeli warplanes attack guerrilla bases in southern Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

which is used by Hizbollah guerrillas as a launching pad for attacks on Israeli troops and their allied Lebanese militiamen in the occupied zone.

Six Israeli soldiers were wounded in a Hizbollah attack in the

zone last Friday. Monday's air raids came two days after U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan ended a visit to Beirut during which he held talks with Lebanese leaders on Israel's offer to withdraw its troops from the south in exchange for security guarantees.

Mr. Annan told reporters in Damascus on Sunday that Syrian leaders had expressed scepticism about the withdrawal offer.

Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bweiz on Monday described Israel's offer as a "clear political manoeuvre."

Speaking before his departure for an Arab League meeting in Egypt, Mr. Bweiz said Israel "has no serious intentions" to pull its troops out of Lebanon, as called for in U.N. resolutions.

Hizbollah is leading a guerrilla war to try to

oust some 1,500 Israeli soldiers and 2,500 members of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army militia from southern Lebanon.

Israel set up the security zone in 1985 to try to protect its northern settlements from guerrilla attacks.



## Anani reveals latest developments on restructuring RJ and attracting strategic partners to major firms

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani said Monday that two international firms had submitted "serious proposals" to buy 40 per cent of the profit-making Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC).

But Dr. Anani declined to name the companies, part of four firms that submitted proposals to become a strategic partner in the state-run JTC.

Industry sources said last month that an American, a British, a Greek and an Italian firm made their offers in line with Jordan's long-delayed privatisation process launched in 1992 under an IMF-agreed economic reform plan.

"Two of these firms have submitted serious proposals," Dr. Anani told reporters during a weekly

briefing. He said a technical committee discussing the offers will submit its decision to a ministerial committee which will decide on the winner.

He declined to say when the results will be announced.

Dr. Anani, also minister of foreign affairs, said several international financial institutions had submitted requests to act as financial advisors to help selecting a strategic partner for the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC).

"The one that will be chosen has to submit a study on the company's situation and to evaluate its assets, real value and gains," he said.

Dr. Anani said a World Bank expert arrived in Amman recently to help privatising Royal Jordanian (RJ) airlines, facing a JD 450 million debt.

He has already submitted a report on RJ's overall sit-

uation. "We are about to invite international firms to study how to restructure RJ," Dr. Anani added.

He said the government was discussing plans to set up a new aviation company with various subsidiaries to turn it into a profit-making operation ahead of RJ's privatisation.

"The new firm will shoulder the responsibility of operating the RJ flights and the airline's legal responsibilities," he added. The subsidiaries will look after the airport's duty free stores, RJ's hotel, and airport maintenance.

Dr. Anani's statement came amid speculation that Saudi multi-billionaire Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal had expressed interest in buying a large share of RJ.

"The government wants to reduce RJ's debts before selling its shares to foreign investors," one official source said.

## Fears Asian economies will export their way to health overblown — WTO

GENEVA (AFP) — Fears that limping Asian economies will export their way back to health, harming business in developed economies, are unjustified, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) said in a report issued Tuesday.

But a slowdown in Asian and U.S. economic growth rates could lead to a cut in global trade of two to three percentage points in volume terms in 1998, the WTO report on 1997 trade developments warned.

Exports of goods globally jumped by 9.5 per cent in volume terms last year, the second-best result in 20 years and above WTO forecasts.

Many pundits worry that the recent round of Asian currency devaluations will lead to a flood of cheap imports into rich countries, damaging some of their industries, slowing economic growth and boosting unemployment, the WTO said.

"These fears would seem to be largely unjustified as far as countries outside the Asia region are concerned," the WTO concluded that exports from Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea and the Philippines, countries battered by the turmoil, would grow this year but not as rapidly as might have been expected

given the massive falls of their currencies against the dollar. The five countries as a whole account for just 3.6 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP), around seven per cent of world trade, and six per cent of global foreign direct investment.

Asia as a whole accounts for 8.6 per cent of U.S. imports and five per cent of West European imports. Japan, in contrast, takes 16 per cent of the region's imports.

Thus, even if Asian exports to the West rise by 20 per cent, "this would not cause a significant problem" for the trade or current account ledgers of foreign countries, the study said.

The study acknowledged that excess capacity due to slack domestic demand could be switched to producing exports.

Other factors, such as healthy export track records in the most seriously hit Asian economies and the fact that multinationals played a big role in their foreign trade, supported a strong export-led recovery.

But a financial liquidity crunch, the high costs of financing trade, expensive imports and the fact that Asian countries transacted the bulk of their trade with each other all undermined export prospects.

External factors could also limit Asian export growth, the study said.

North America's GDP growth would probably slow this year, implying slower import demand while uncertainty hangs over economic prospects of the two biggest Asian import markets, Japan and China.

Japan, which recorded sluggish import growth last year, is mired in recession, according to the latest figures, and a slump could further cut Japanese purchases of Asian goods.

Japanese imports last year grew by a meagre 2.5 per cent, barely higher than the 1996 level.

If the Asian financial crisis is a largely confined to the five countries in question, the repercussions "should not result in more than a small dent in global economic growth," the report said.

As slower growth in North and South America and Asia is expected to be offset partly by stronger growth in Europe, "a decrease in global trade of two to three percentage points may be expected."

"This, however, would still leave the rate of global trade expansion above the rate recorded in the first half of the 1990s."

## Cutback announcement drives up oil prices

WASHINGTON (AFP) — World oil prices surged on Monday following producer pledges to make deep cuts in output, but analysts predicted the price trend would be short-lived.

After Singapore and London reported sharp increases, U.S. crude oil prices for May delivery leapt \$2.39 to \$17 a barrel.

But by mid-morning in New York trading they had fallen back to \$16.33.

Prices in London gained 12 per cent, with Brent, the reference North Sea crude, adding \$1.63 a barrel to \$14.90.

In earlier trading in Singapore, Brent at one point was selling for \$15.05 a barrel.

But industry watchers said that given current oversupply, an acute economic slowdown in Asia and warmer weather in the United States and Europe, the effect of cutback pledges announced over the weekend could be limited.

"What you saw in the market's quick response is that apparently there's some commitment there," noted Edward Murphy of the American Petroleum Institute.

"But I think the market is going to wait and see if the cutbacks actually occur and how significant they are."

Faced with oil prices that

have plunged to their lowest levels since 1988, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, both members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), joined with non-OPEC member Mexico in a campaign to slash global output by up to two million barrels a day, 2.7 per cent of world production.

The three countries said Sunday they had so far secured pledges from other producers to cut back by 1.1 million barrels a day from April 1 and that more contacts were underway to reach the target of between 1.6 million and two million barrels.

Iran, Algeria, Kuwait, Libya and the United Arab Emirates, all OPEC producers, followed suit in announcing cuts, as well as Oman which is not a part of the 11-nation cartel.

The energy ministry in Qatar, an OPEC quota-buster like Venezuela, backed the cuts and said Monday it would also announce reductions before the start of April.

In the aftermath of the announcement, industry attention was drawn to Venezuela and non-OPEC Norway.

"It is interesting that the Venezuelans are in there because they're the ones who have been overproducing,"

Mr. Murphy said. Despite the recent fall in prices, Venezuela had refused to abide by its OPEC quota and had been pumping out an excess of between 800,000 and 900,000 barrels a day.

Norway, a major North Sea producer, on Sunday declined to follow suit and reduce output but did not rule out cutbacks at some future date.

At Texas-based research firm Hornsby Company, Nizam Sharif foresaw only "short-term" price hikes — perhaps lasting one to two months.

"Once the prices go back up, there's always the inclination to ratchet up production again," he said.

"But if the cutbacks are confirmed, and particularly if Norway joins in, they might go up a bit more."

Working against the producers, according to Mr. Sharif, is a sharp slump in Asian demand — by about half a million barrels a day from normal levels — and prospects for a pronounced increase in Iraqi volume.

Iraq has been authorised by the United Nations to double the value of its overseas oil sales to \$5.2 billion every six months, using the proceeds to meet social needs.

## Israeli interest rates cut

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's central bank announced Monday that in response to falling inflation it would cut its key lending rate by 0.4 percentage points to 12.2 per cent as of April 1.

It was the latest in a series of interest rate cuts by the bank since the start of the year. It lowered the lending rate 0.8 percentage points in February.

"We have cut the interest rate in line with falling inflation," said Yaakov Frenkel, governor of the Bank of Israel.

"If the decline in inflation continues, we will continue our policy of lowering interest rates but in a cautious and measured way because we do not want prices to rebound," he said.

The rate of inflation in Israel fell to seven per cent last year, the lowest level in three decades, reflecting a slight easing in monetary policy and a generalised slowdown in the Israeli economy.

In February the con-

sumer price index fell 0.1 per cent, bringing the annualised rate of inflation down to between five and six per cent.

Dan Propper, president of the Israeli Manufacturers Association, welcomed the latest interest rate cut but said the fall in the cost of money "should be more rapid."

"Are current interest rates in real terms are murderous, nearly eight per cent, which is slowing economic growth and worsening inflation," he said.

Israel's gross national product (GNP) grew by only 1.9 per cent last year, down from 4.5 per cent in 1996, while unemployment rose to 7.7 per cent.

A forecast issued Monday by the Israeli investment firm Meitav predicted the economy would grow barely one per cent in 1998 "unless there is a breakthrough in the peace process" which has been stalled for a year.

## Canada tops G-7 for GDP growth in '98

OTTAWA (AFP) — Canada has the fastest growing economy among the Group of Seven (G-7) leading industrialised nations, with its gross domestic product (GDP) expected to rise 3.2 per cent this year, the Conference Board of Canada has said.

The G-7 groups Canada, with Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

The Conference Board said aggregate growth of the G-7 nations should be 2.1 per cent this year against 2.7 per cent last year as a result of the downturn in Japan.

The business research group said Canada's projected 8.3 per cent growth in export of products and services is expected to fuel its GDP.

Meanwhile inflation is expected to be 1.9 per cent this year and two per cent in 1999.

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Handle business this morning. This evening, you're going to want to relax at home. A nice meal, good music and perhaps a soak in the hot tub will make this a memorable Friday night. If your sweetheart has other plans, let him or her go without you. An occasional absence does make the heart grow fonder.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You're able to learn more quickly than usual. Information just sticks to your brain. So study something your boss or professor has been trying to teach you. A loved one can help. He or she may not have complete mastery of the subject yet, but the insights will be priceless.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) It's a good afternoon to go shopping. If you can find the energy. It looks like you'd rather just take off early on your weekend jaunt. That could prove more expensive than you'd planned. Better check on your motel reservations and other little details.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) It looks like you could pull off the deal of the century if you got insider information and tried something unusual. You might be able to wrangle an unconventional loan. If you don't have somebody helping you with a real estate deal, start investigating one. He or she will most likely be a Libra. **LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Your luck changes for the worse as your day progresses. There's a whole lot to do. Scan over your lists first thing this morning. Sort out those little pieces of paper in your pockets, too. A couple of hours spent getting organised this morning could really save your bacon later in the day.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Conditions are hectic this morning, but you'll get the most creative work done then. Meet with friends later in the day. A party would be a good way to relax and renew your energy. In fact, it's a good weekend to party, from tonight clear through Sunday.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) This is easy, but don't get lazy. You're going to have to perform up to the standards you've already set for yourself. Better check your calendar again. If you miss this meeting, you'll be in trouble. It looks like there might be quite a bit of money involved.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Conditions for travel look excellent through Sunday. How long has it been since you and your sweetheart had a romantic cruise? If you can't afford the Princess line, a sailboat will do. If you can't even manage a rowboat, don't let that stop you. There's some sort of cruising you can do this weekend.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) You and your partner had better have a meeting this morning. You're going to have to shell out some money later in the day, so you need to agree on priorities. If either of you spends the money without the other's approval, it could make the mutual purchase impossible.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) If you push yourself hard this morning, you might get out early. It'll definitely be worth the effort. You work harder than three or four people most of the time, so why not allow yourself to relax harder than three or four people as well? Go for it.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You'd like to spend the whole day in fascinating conversation. Instead, you're going to have to take care of business. Consider the possibilities and make the best decision. It won't be easy, but it could bring you fame as well as fortune.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) This weekend you'll be even more romantic than usual. If you don't have a sweetheart, consider somebody you've always thought of as a good friend. There might be a difference in your ages, but that's OK. It's the level of communication that counts.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

## THE BUSINESS

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

| Country     | USD    | DEM    | GBP    |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Canada      | 1.3264 | 5.9881 |        |
| France      | 0.5475 | 2.1288 |        |
| Germany     | 1.6392 | 0.0654 |        |
| Italy       | 0.6759 | 122.45 | 0.3984 |
| Japan       | 0.0077 | 140.18 | 0.4417 |
| UK          | 0.7347 | 1.3917 | 0.4228 |
| US          | 0.0006 | 1.0147 | 0.3389 |
| Switzerland | 0.4958 | 88.68  | 0.2897 |
| Australia   | 0.1632 | 0.2982 | 0.2571 |

Major Stocks

| Country     | USD    | JOD    | SAR     |
|-------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Canada      | 1.4104 | 0.7390 | 2.7865  |
| France      | 0.2865 | 0.1280 | 0.2898  |
| Germany     | 0.285  | 1.5826 | 0.9481  |
| Italy       | 0.2747 | 0.1947 | 0.3301  |
| Japan       | 3.2725 | 0.2229 | 12.2774 |
| UK          | 0.2722 | 0.1920 | 1.0242  |
| US          | 0.65   | 0.4540 | 2.4545  |
| Switzerland | 0.2941 | 0.2085 | 1.1021  |

Energy

| Oil   | Last   | Revised |
|-------|--------|---------|
| WTI   | 14.27  | 14.27   |
| Brent | 14.27  | 14.27   |
| Crude | 12.38  | 12.38   |
| Gas   | 10.85  | 10.85   |
| Coal  | 144.10 | 139.00  |

Currency

| Country     | Buy    | Sell   |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| Canada      | 0.708  | 0.710  |
| France      | 1.803  | 1.1562 |
| Germany     | 0.3864 | 0.3883 |
| Italy       | 0.4724 | 0.4748 |
| Japan       | 0.1154 | 0.116  |
| UK          | 0.5418 | 0.5445 |
| US          | 0.3429 | 0.3446 |
| Switzerland | 0.3628 | 0.3645 |

Central Bank of Jordan

Main Equity

| Index      | Value    |
|------------|----------|
| DOW JONES  | 8211.85  |
| S&P 500    | 755.85   |
| FT-SE 100  | 1553.9   |
| NIKKEI 225 | 15882.32 |
| CAC 40     | 3655.32  |
| DAX        | 4377.22  |

STUDIO

Professional  
1 hour  
at our shop and  
JUMBO 30%  
Free  
20 x 30 cm.

Shriman - C  
Grindlays  
Phone: 541  
Sweetish Tel

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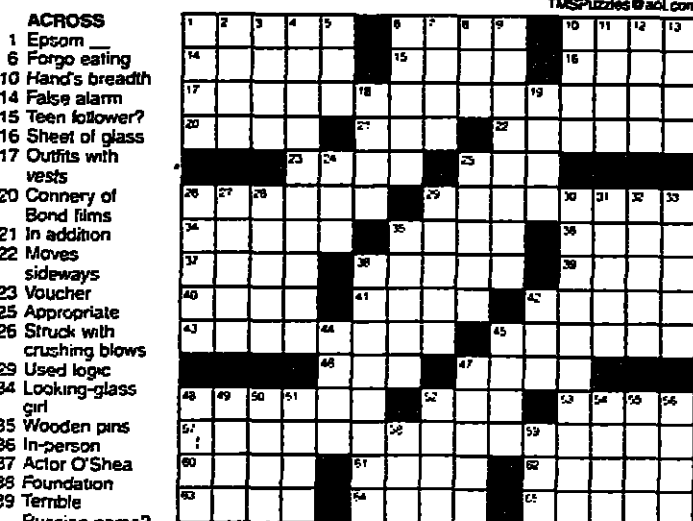
STUDIO

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JUMBO 30%  
Free  
20 x 30 cm.

Shriman - C  
Grindlays  
Phone: 541  
Sweetish Tel

## THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Across  
2 Down  
3 Across  
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99 Across  
100 Down



By Louise G. White  
St. Petersburg, FL

- ACROSS
- Epson
  - Forgo eating
  - Hand's breadth
  - False alarm
  - Teen follower?
  - Sheet of glass
  - Outfits with vests
  - Connelly of Bond films
  - In addition
  - Moves sideways
  - Voucher
  - Appropriate
  - Struck with crushing blows
  - Used logic
  - Looking-glass girl
  - Wooden pins
  - In-person
  - Actor O'Shea
  - Foundation
  - Terrible
  - Russian name?
  - Dracula Lugosi
  - Phonic pests
  - Baking chambers
  - Moments
  - Danish seaport
  - Greek letters
  - Went last
  - Gives lip
  - Boozier
  - Abrasive tool
  - Casual outfit
  - Semi-jeremy
  - Charles Lamb's pen name
  - Follows orders
  - in the belly
  - Workout figs.
  - Selling feature
- DOWN
- Fast planes, for short
  - Heart problem?
  - Dr. Zhivago's love
  - Belied military-style rainwear
  - Visualize
  - Peetle
  - Added years
  - Very dry, as wine
  - Infringe
  - Potato
  - Bucket
  - Starter chips
  - Loch in the Scottish highlands
  - Bill stamp
  - Tends to
  - Courtesy comedy series, "How"
  - Sponsorship
  - Classic Disney movie
  - Visitor on Earth
  - opera singer
  - Relates
  - Green army uniforms
  - "Separate Tables" Oscar-winner
  - Roy Rogers' wife Dale
  - Thick
  - Trousers
  - Handrail
  - Poem of praise
  - Impersonator
  - Makes a decision
  - Soft drinks
  - Wild guess
  - Sailing
  - Worn out
  - Moral
  - Clip with scissors
  - Top cards
  - Scottish island
  - Attention-getting sound
  - Beer choice
  - Mauna volcano

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



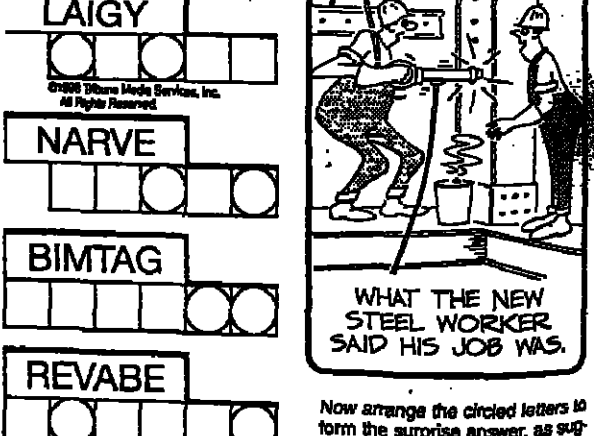
## THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"This stuff loosens dry skin for \$16 a bottle. A sheet of sandpaper does the same thing a lot cheaper."

## JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Yesterday's Jumbles: FRAUD CURVE DOUBLY ABDUCT  
Answer: What the student weatherman faced when he failed the test — A CLOUDY FUTURE



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Assets of provident funds, social security account for 30 per cent of market value of AFM shares

**\*\* THE ASSETS** of provident funds and those of the Social Security Corporation, estimated to total about JD 1.3 billion, account for more than one third of the market value of all shares listed in the Jordanian capital market, the assistant director general of the stock exchange, known as the Amman Financial Market (AFM), has said.

Noting that the savings and pension sector represents the largest corporate investor in the Kingdom, AFM Assistant Director General Jalil Tarif expected the assets of the provident funds to increase by tenfold during the coming 50 years to reach JD2,000 million.

Mr. Tarif, a member of the committee that drafted the saving funds law, said that, according to a study, the returns achieved by the funds during 1996 were only about two per cent with some funds even registering no returns at all.

He attributed the low returns generated by the funds to many reasons including the lack of qualifications and capabilities of the persons managing the investments. Consequently, Mr. Tarif said, the savings are not directed to the proper investment channels which fulfill the long-term requirement of the funds.

According to Mr. Tarif, the study showed that the largest percentage of the provident funds, or 34 per cent of the total assets of the funds, were invested as deposits at banks. Investments in shares accounted for 30 per cent and in real estate the investments were the lowest at 12 per cent. The remaining 24

per cent of the funds' assets were loans extended to employees or members of the various funds.

Mr. Tarif compared the above-mentioned breakdown to other funds in developed countries, highlighting the situation in the U.S. where 90 per cent of the provident funds are invested in fixed-income stocks, bonds and shares with only three per cent invested as deposits and five per cent in real estate. "As such, most of the investments by the funds are directed towards long-term investments to counter the long-term obligations on the funds."

The AFM assistant director general highlighted the importance of saving funds by indicating that they cover nearly 150,000 workers who represent around a quarter of the population. He estimated the total amount of the saving funds at JD250 million which represent about five per cent of the gross domestic product.

"The draft law to regulate the saving funds focuses on giving those funds a legal identity to separate their assets from other assets of any entity," Mr. Tarif stressed. He emphasised that subjecting the saving funds to government supervision was to safeguard the national interests and the interests of the workers. "Mismanagement and misuse at some funds will have serious social and economic effects," he said affirming that the government will not intervene in the independence and liberty that the funds enjoy (Al Aswaq).

## Trading in commodities will enable Jordan's new Islamic bank to distribute dividends monthly

By Mahmoud Masharqah  
Special to the Jordan Times

**AMMAN** — The Arab International Islamic Bank (AIIB) Monday announced the introduction of "Commodity Investment Account" system whereby it makes it possible for the bank to distribute dividends to investors on a monthly basis.

AIIB General Manager Jamil Dasouqi who made the announcement at a press conference said that under the new system the bank will trade in particular commodities like timber, petroleum, iron, lead, copper and other materials and distribute dividends to the investors and shareholders monthly.

The new system has been presented to a special sharia (Islamic) committee which controls Islamic-governed

operations at the bank and won its approval as conforming to the provisions and rules of Islamic law, according to Mr. Dasouqi.

He said the bank intends to open three branches in Jordan during 1998 and is planning to open other branches later on in the Kingdom and abroad.

Claiming that the bank has made many successes since its establishment late last year, he said the deposits of the clients have exceeded all expectations but he declined to give figures.

He said the AIIB is an independent bank and has its own board of directors and accounts separate and independent from the Arab Bank.

The AIIB now employs 116 employees, 35 of whom used to work for the liquidated Amman



Jamil Dasouqi addresses press conference on Monday

Investment Bank. 65 from the Arab Bank and the rest recruited from the Arab Islamic banks.

According to Mr. Dasouqi, the assets of Islamic banks in the world are estimated at \$100 billion

and the deposits at Islamic banks in Jordan are estimated at \$600 million.

## Israeli computer company to set up centre in Amman

By Ghaila Alol  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

**AMMAN** — Israeli computer firms, facing a shortage in software engineers, are tapping the saturated Jordanian market to boost operations and diversify products.

Malam Systems Ltd., a Tel Aviv-based computers

and technologies company, is about to open a software development centre in Amman with a Jordanian partner.

With an annual \$40 million turnover and 350 employees serving 4,000 end-users, the company is banking on Jordan's cheaper software engineers to boost its profile.

"The total cost of hiring a software engineer in Jordan is \$5,000 a month — much less than in Israel," said a source representing the Jordanian partner who requested anonymity.

The joint company, which plans to hire 20 employees after its first year of operation, will send five of its software engineers to Tel

Aviv for training. "Although Jordan has well-educated software programmers, its engineers need further training and practical experience," added the source.

During its first year of activity, the company will attempt to tackle the dilemma of the so-called "millennium bug" — a nightmare

for companies worldwide who have to grapple with computer problems when they start to blather incoherently on January 1st 2000, a date they will mistake for 1900.

In the second year, the centre will continue to focus on the bug but will also look at developing programmes and applications, the source said.

The joint venture, set to start operations in September, will be a leap for Jordan's software production since the new centre will serve local, regional and international markets.

However, the issue of Israeli investments in Jordan remains highly sensitive for many of the Kingdom's 4.2 million population who are opposed to peace with Israel in the absence of an overall settlement to the Arab-Israeli question.

Trade cooperation between Jordan and Israel is most evident at Irbid's Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) — a status that grants Irbid-based industries duty free access in U.S. markets.

Israel has recently set up a \$100 million "facility" to protect Israeli companies investing in Jordan from "political and trade risks."

The insurance facility will help promote joint ventures between Jordanian and Israeli officials.

Jordanian and Israeli officials believe this move will encourage more Israeli businessmen to shift operations to the Kingdom or expand already existing ones.

In addition to the eight Jordanian-Israeli joint ventures based at QIZ, seven joint industrial companies are already operating in different parts of the Kingdom, Israeli officials said.

Thirty Jordanian textile companies are also cooperating with 17 similar Israeli firms to reexport finished goods to U.S. markets, creating an outcry among textile manufacturers in the Jewish state.

## REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 23/03/98 18:29

| Currency    | USD    | DEM    | GBP    | CHF     | JPY     | CAD    | ITL     | NLG     | FRF     |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| US Dollar   | -      | 1.8284 | 0.9595 | 1.4806  | 130.18  | 1.4190 | 1799.10 | 2.0584  | 6.1280  |
| DE Mark     | 0.6475 | -      | 0.3259 | 0.8161  | 71.27   | 0.7767 | 984.68  | 1.1272  | 3.3536  |
| GB Sterling | 1.6782 | 3.0654 | -      | 2.5014  | 218.51  | 2.3828 | 3018.89 | 3.4550  | 10.2794 |
| CH Franc    | 0.6709 | 1.2245 | 0.3894 | -       | 87.30   | 0.8513 | 1206.07 | 138.03  | 4.1067  |
| JP Yen      | 0.0077 | 1.4018 | 0.4571 | 1.1441  | -       | 1.0892 | 13.81   | 158.00  | 4.8995  |
| CA Dollar   | 0.7047 | 1.2917 | 0.4228 | 1.0864  | 1.09    | -      | 1270.80 | 1.4551  | 4.3265  |
| IT Lira     | 0.0006 | 0.1047 | 0.3309 | 0.0828  | 1383.70 | 0.7884 | -       | 11.44   | 3.4018  |
| ML Guilder  | 0.4888 | 88.89  | 0.2882 | 72.40   | 63.21   | 0.6892 | 873.91  | -       | 2.9737  |
| FR Franc    | 0.1632 | 0.2882 | 0.0872 | 24.3367 | 21.24   | 0.2317 | 33.61   | 33.6100 | -       |

| Currency       | USD    | JOD    | SAR     | BAH    | QAT    | KUW    | AED    | LBP     | EGP    |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| US Dollar      | -      | 0.7090 | 3.7605  | 0.3770 | 3.6408 | 0.3055 | 3.6728 | 1528.00 | 3.4000 |
| Jordan Dinar   | 1.4104 | -      | 5.2888  | 0.5317 | 5.1351 | 0.4309 | 5.1803 | 2155.18 | 4.7964 |
| Saudi Riyal    | 0.2668 | 0.1890 | -       | 0.1005 | 0.97   | 0.0815 | 0.98   | 407.41  | 0.9085 |
| Bahrain Dinar  | 2.65   | 1.8808 | 9.9483  | -      | 9.86   | 0.8103 | 9.74   | 4053.05 | 9.0185 |
| Qatar Dinar    | 0.2747 | 0.1947 | 1.0301  | 1.0301 | -      | 0.0839 | 1.01   | 418.69  | 0.9339 |
| Kuwait Dinar   | 3.2735 | 2.3209 | 12.2774 | 1.2341 | 11.82  | -      | 12.02  | 5001.96 | 0.9339 |
| Emirate Dinar  | 0.2723 | 0.1930 | 1.0212  | 1.0226 | 0.9913 | 0.0832 | -      | 416.03  | 0.9257 |
| Lebanese L1000 | 0.65   | 0.4640 | 2.4645  | 0.2467 | 2.3827 | 0.1999 | 2.4037 | -       | 2.2251 |
| Egyptian       | 0.2941 | 0.2085 | 1.1031  | 0.1109 | 1.0708 | 0.0898 | 1.0802 | 449.42  | -      |

| Currency  | USD    | DEM     | GBP     | CHF     | JPY     |
|-----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| SA Riyal  | 0.2868 | 0.4871  | 0.15882 | 0.39758 | 34.7367 |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.49741 | 0.16218 | 0.40598 | 35.4711 |
| KW Dinar  | 3.2735 | 5.98088 | 1.98008 | 4.88043 | 426.439 |
| BH Dinar  | 0.3770 | 4.84498 | 1.58003 | 3.95413 | 345.543 |
| CY Pound  | 1.9733 | 3.4225  | 1.1157  | 2.7932  | 243.892 |

| Currency    | Buy    | Sell   |
|-------------|--------|--------|
| US Dollar   | 0.708  | 0.710  |
| GB Sterling | 1.1803 | 1.1862 |
| DE Mark     | 0.3884 | 0.3883 |
| CH Franc    | 0.4724 | 0.4748 |
| JP Yen      | 0.1154 | 0.116  |
| FR Franc    | 0.5418 | 0.5445 |
| NL Guilder  | 0.3429 | 0.3446 |
| IT Lira     | 0.3928 | 0.3948 |

| Index              | Value    | Chng   | % Chng | High    | Low     | Pr Cls  |
|--------------------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| New York DOW JONES | 8531.95  | -74.48 | -0.84  | 8899.95 | 8827.71 | 8906.43 |
| New York S&P 500   | 1095.89  | -3.27  | -0.3   | 1099.16 | 1094.25 | 1096.16 |
| London FT-SE 100   | 5855.8   | -0.4   | -0.01  | 6023.1  | 5946.8  | 5996.3  |
| Tokyo NIKKEI 225   | 16688.83 | 38.36  | 0.23   | 17045.6 | 16744.4 | 16830.5 |
| Paris CAC 40       | 3680.13  | -8.78  | -0.24  | 3718.82 | 3661.28 | 3688.91 |
| Frankfurt DAX      | 4871.32  | -30.23 | -0.6   | 5040.63 | 4870.98 | 5001.65 |

| PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH      | COMPANY'S NAME | P / E                  | DIV.        | NO. OF SHARES | NO. OF TRADS | VALUE TRADED JD | OPEN PRICE | CLOSE PRICE | CHANGE       |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 346.000                  | 250.000        | ARAB BANK              | 13.8        | 1.19          | 14           | 420             | 141750     | 336.50      | 337.50 1.00+ |
| 2.340                    | 1.640          | JOR. PETROL. BK.       | 2           | 0.00          | 20           | 6670            | 11077      | 1.66        | 1.66 -       |
| 3.540                    | 1.320          | BANK OF JORDAN         | 4.2         | 0.00          | 1            | 400             | 928        | 1.32        | 1.32 -       |
| 2.680                    | 1.650          | INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.    | 10.3        | 6.07          | 4            | 2100            | 3612       | 1.72        | 1.72 -       |
| 5.300                    | 4.400          | THE ROYAL BANK         | 29.3        | 1.98          | 17           | 7750            | 38124      | 4.90        | 4.91 .01+    |
| 4.180                    | 1.820          | JOR. KIWAT BANK        | 9           | 0.00          | 3            | 500             | 1686       | 1.84        | 1.90 .06+    |
| .920                     | .620           | JOR. GULF BANK         | 3.8         | 10.94         | 12           | 15441           | 9881       | .65         | .64 .01+     |
| 4.020                    | 1.960          | JOR. ISLAMIC BANK      | 10.1        | 4.82          | 9            | 2521            | 4990       | 1.97        | 1.99 .02+    |
| 1.400                    | .800           | BEIT AL-MAL (BEITNA)   | 5           | 17.05         | 4            | 1450            | 1283       | .89         | .88 .01-     |
| BANK SECTOR TOTALS       |                | INDEX: 233.71          | %CHG: +0.30 | 84            | 37652        | 212930          |            |             |              |
| 2.400                    | 1.590          | JOR. FRENCH INSUR.     | 5.5         | 12.63         | 4            | 2450            | 4764       | 1.93        | 1.98 .05+    |
| INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS  |                | INDEX: 121.73          | %CHG: +0.24 | 4             | 2450         | 4764            |            |             |              |
| 2.340                    | 1.550          | JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.     | 9.8         | 4.95          | 28           | 13972           | 28164      | 2.00        | 2.02 .02+    |
| 5.500                    | 2.450          | KHAYMA MINERALS        | 57.1        | 0.00          | 2            | 2105            | 11009      | 5.50        | 5.22 .28-    |
| 1.150                    | .930           | JOR. PORTFOLIO         | 81.9        | 0.00          | 16           | 9292            | 9682       | 1.04        | 1.05 .01+    |
| 1.120                    | .850           | REAL ESTATE INV.       | 13.2        | 6.32          | 1            | 100             | 95         | 1.00        | .95 .05-     |
| .590                     | .370           | JORDAN INTL. TRAD.     | 19.5        | 0.00          | 1            | 1000            | 380        | .38         | .38 -        |
| 9.350                    | 6.700          | ALBA T                 | 9.5         | 6.42          | 3            | 250             | 2327       | 9.20        | 9.35 .15+    |
| 1.480                    | 1.150          | MID. EAST TRUST        | 17.2        | 0.00          | 12           | 120000          | 136200     | 1.16        | 1.13 .03-    |
| 4.600                    | 2.890          | JARSA INTL. INV. EDUC. | 10.8        | 1.84          | 3            | 1550            | 1015       | .93         | .92 .01-     |
| 1.090                    | .900           | SARMA EDUCATION        | 9           | 0.00          | 2            | 1100            | 1015       | .93         | .92 .01-     |
| 1.830                    | 1.550          | JORDAN STYL            | 9           | 7.08          | 10           | 3100            | 4841       | 1.56        | 1.56 -       |
| .810                     | .600           | UNION LAND DEV.        | 9           | 0.00          | 1            | 250             | 165        | .66         | .66 -        |
| SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS    |                | INDEX: 118.98          | %CHG: +0.45 | 79            | 152723       | 200594          |            |             |              |
| 4.450                    | 2.690          | JOR. CEMENT FACT.      | 18.5        | 4.00          | 22           | 10968           | 30151      | 2.74        | 2.75 .01+    |
| 11.150                   | 9.200          | JOR. PETROL. REFINERY  | 10.2        | 8.43          | 3            | 230             | 2433       | 10.51       | 10.55 .04+   |
| 2.480                    | 1.100          | INDUSTRIAL COM. AG.    | 0.00        | 0.00          | 6            | 2756            | 3116       | 1.13        | 1.15 .02+    |
| 5.700                    | 3.440          | ARAB PHARM. IND.       | 14.2        | 3.88          | 59           | 17500           | 90174      | 5.14        | 5.15 .01+    |
| 4.750                    | 4.750          | JOR. PRINT & PACK.     | 9           | 0.00          | 1            | 150             | 677        | 4.75        | 4.51 .24-    |
| 1.530                    | .930           | JOR. KIWAT BANK        | 14.9        | 6.67          | 7            | 3000            | 3605       | 1.22        | 1.20 .02-    |
| 1.420                    | .770           | RAJIA INDUSTRIES       | 0.00        | 0.00          | 4            | 18000           | 1471       | .62         | .62 -        |
| 6.350                    | 4.400          | DAR ALDAMA DV. INV.    | 15.1        | 4.07          | 3            | 950             | 5825       | 6.10        | 6.15 .05+    |
| 3.460                    | 2.220          | ARAB ALUM. IND.        | 6.4         | 9.09          | 4            | 1650            | 4538       | 2.71        | 2.75 .04+    |
| .990                     | .400           | LIVESTOCK & POULTRY    | 10.4        | 0.00          | 2            | 1000            | 5856       | .49         | .49 -        |
| 1.120                    | .680           | ARAB PAPER COV. TRD.   | 22.3        | 0.00          | 20           | 11950           | 7161       | .73         | .73 -        |
| .630                     | .440           | NATIONAL STEEL IND.    | 9           | 0.00          | 1            | 250             | 155        | .64         | .62 .02-     |
| .930                     | .370           | INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM. | 9           | 0.00          | 18           | 17050           | 7161       | .42         | .42 -        |
| 2.250                    | 1.380          | UNIV. CHEM. IND.       | 12.6        | 7.14          | 9            | 5050            | 7105       | 1.42        | 1.42 -       |
| 3.000                    | .920           | NATL. CABLE WIRE. NPAC | 27.7        | 0.00          | 13           | 5350            | 6176       | 1.16        | 1.15 .01-    |
| .950                     | .790           | ROYAL STEEL & WOLDS    | 9           | 0.00          | 13           | 10250           | 6150       | .59         | .60 .01+     |
| 1.560                    | 1.150          | ARAB PHARM. CHEM.      | 16.9        | 5.30          | 3            | 330             | 312        | .32         | .32 -        |
| .620                     | .330           | NATL. CABLE CO.        | 13.8        | 4.79          | 4            | 800             | 949        | .77         | 1.40 .62+    |
| 1.080                    | .810           | JOR. NEW CABLE CO.     | 18.7        | 0.00          | 11           | 8857            | 9034       | 1.01        | 1.02 .01+    |
| 1.680                    | 1.290          | SE - DAY READY MEAL    | 46.8        | 0.00          | 6            | 3200            | 4381       | .33         | 1.33 -       |
| 1.250                    | 1.080          | INTL. TOBACCO          | 6.5         | 0.00          | 3            | 1500            | 1770       | 1.18        | 1.18 -       |
| .850                     | .660           | UNION CR. & VEG.       | 46.4        | 0.00          | 1            | 500             | 530        | 1.02        | 1.02 -       |
| .820                     | .570           | MID. EAST COMPLEX      | 7.6         | 16.13         | 14           | 20380           | 73712      | .79         | .81 .02+     |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS |                | INDEX: 109.95          | %CHG: +0.16 | 335           | 284894       | 345269          |            |             |              |
| GRAND TOTAL              |                | INDEX: 167.02          | %CHG: +0.26 | 502           | 477719       | 763557          |            |             |              |

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## SCOREBOARD

| NBA                |     |                 |              |
|--------------------|-----|-----------------|--------------|
| Detroit            | 105 | Portland        | 98           |
| Utah               | 124 | New York        | 109 (2nd OT) |
| Miami              | 112 | Portland        | 100          |
| Chicago            | 102 | Toronto         | 100          |
| Boston             | 108 | Philadelphia    | 100          |
| Indiana            | 96  | Minnesota       | 108          |
| Washington         | 102 | New Jersey      | 104 (OT)     |
| Orlando            | 97  | Golden State    | 104 (OT)     |
| LA Lakers          | 95  | Sacramento      | 100          |
| San Antonio        | 93  | Phoenix         | 100          |
| NHL                |     |                 |              |
| Chicago            | 3   | Boston          | 0            |
| Dallas             | 0   | Pittsburgh      | 0 (OT)       |
| Anaheim            | 2   | Ottawa          | 0            |
| NY Islanders       | 3   | Palm Beach      | 0 (OT)       |
| Philadelphia       | 3   | NY Rangers      | 0 (OT)       |
| Calgary            | 3   | St. Louis       | 0            |
| Phoenix            | 3   | San Jose        | 0            |
| French Cup         |     |                 |              |
| Quarter-final      |     |                 |              |
| Bourg-Peronnas     | 0   | Paris           | 0            |
| Italian Serie A    |     |                 |              |
| Atalanta           | 1   | Parma           | 0            |
| Bari               | 0   | Sampdoria       | 0            |
| Florentina         | 1   | Bologna         | 0            |
| Lazio              | 0   | Fiorentina      | 0            |
| Napoli             | 2   | Lazio           | 0            |
| Parma              | 2   | Inter Milan     | 0            |
| Udinese            | 3   | AS Roma         | 0            |
| Vicenza            | 1   | AS Roma         | 0            |
| AC Milan           | 0   | Inter Milan     | 0            |
| Belgian League     |     |                 |              |
| Lokeren            | 2   | Lommel          | 0            |
| Genk               | 1   | Harcobee        | 0            |
| Bundesliga         |     |                 |              |
| VfB Stuttgart      | 0   | Bayern Munich   | 0            |
| Spanish League     |     |                 |              |
| Barcelona          | 2   | Athletic Bilbao | 0            |
| Real Sociedad      | 2   | Real Betis      | 0            |
| Valencia           | 2   | Espanyol        | 0            |
| D. La Coruna       | 2   | Zaragoza        | 0            |
| Sporting Gijon     | 2   | Real Madrid     | 0            |
| Malorca            | 2   | Celta Vigo      | 0            |
| R. Sarriena        | 2   | Valladolid      | 0            |
| Tenerife           | 2   | Oviedo          | 0            |
| Real Madrid        | 2   | Compostela      | 0            |
| Portuguese League  |     |                 |              |
| D. Chaves          | 0   | Sporting        | 0            |
| Vizela             | 0   | Campanha        | 0            |
| Rio Ave            | 1   | Esportivo       | 0            |
| Sporting Braga     | 3   | Varzim          | 0            |
| Porto              | 0   | Maritimo        | 0            |
| V. Guimarães       | 0   | Beira           | 0            |
| Hungarian League   |     |                 |              |
| Ujpest             | 2   | Dorogi          | 0            |
| Bekescsaba         | 2   | Haladás         | 0            |
| Kispest HFC        | 1   | BVSC            | 0            |
| Tiszakecskés       | 1   | Szécsény        | 0            |
| DVSC               | 1   | MFC Budapest    | 0            |
| Győr               | 0   | Debrecen        | 0            |
| Videoton           | 1   | Szécsény        | 0            |
| Ferencvaros        | 1   | Mező            | 0            |
| Zalaegerszeg       | 1   | Gazdag          | 0            |
| Dutch League       |     |                 |              |
| FC Groningen       | 0   | Twente          | 0            |
| NAC Breda          | 0   | Go Ahead        | 0            |
| S. Rotterdam       | 1   | FC VVV          | 0            |
| Belgian League     |     |                 |              |
| Lokeren            | 2   | Lommel          | 0            |
| Romanian League    |     |                 |              |
| CSM Rostov         | 3   | Corona          | 0            |
| FC National        | 3   | CS Pandur       | 0            |
| FC Bacau           | 3   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| C. Urziceni        | 1   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| U. Cluj            | 2   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| FC Arges           | 2   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| D. Bucharest       | 2   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| F. Falticeni       | 0   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| Rapid Bucharest    | 2   | FC Vaslui       | 0            |
| Greek Championship |     |                 |              |
| Heraclio           | 0   | Olympiacos      | 0            |
| Lokomotiv          | 0   | Panathinaikos   | 0            |
| OFI                | 0   | Panathinaikos   | 0            |
| Xanthi             | 0   | Panathinaikos   | 0            |
| Ethnikos           | 0   | Panathinaikos   | 0            |
| Athinaikos         | 0   | Panathinaikos   | 0            |
| Kalamata           | 0   | Panathinaikos   | 0            |
| Swiss Championship |     |                 |              |
| Lausanne           | 0   | FC Zurich       | 0            |
| Grasshoppers       | 0   | FC Zurich       | 0            |
| Lucerne            | 0   | FC Zurich       | 0            |
| FC St. Gallen      | 0   | FC Zurich       | 0            |
| Turkish League     |     |                 |              |
| Ankaraspor         | 0   | Beşiktaş        | 0            |
| Samsunspor         | 0   | Beşiktaş        | 0            |
| Vanspor            | 0   | Beşiktaş        | 0            |
| C. Dardanel        | 0   | Beşiktaş        | 0            |
| Sakaryaspor        | 0   | Beşiktaş        | 0            |
| Fenerbahçe         | 0   | Beşiktaş        | 0            |
| Friendship matches |     |                 |              |
| QPR                | 0   | Sheff Wed       | 0            |



Miami Heat guard Tim Hardaway (C) finds a hole between Portland Trail Blazers defencemen Rasheed Wallace (L) and John Croty (R) during first half NBA action (Reuters photo)

## Jazz defeat Knicks in double overtime

NEW YORK (AP) — The Utah Jazz gained their 50th victory of the season, tying them with Seattle for the best record in the Western Conference, by outlasting the New York Knicks 124-119 in double overtime.

Karl Malone had 30 points and 14 rebounds. Adam Keefe scored a season-high 25 points. John Stockton had 22 points and 14 assists and Jeff Hornacek scored 16. The Jazz have won 13 of 14.

John Starks scored 26 and Allan Houston had 25 for the Knicks, who blew several chances to come away with a crucial victory Sunday in their quest to make the playoffs. New York blew an early 17-point lead and a seven-point lead late in regulation.

Houston missed what could have been a winning free throw with 1.5 seconds remaining in the fourth, and Starks missed a finger roll at the buzzer in the first overtime.

• **Pistons 105, Hawks 98:** In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Joe Dumars scored nine of his 16 points during a key fourth-quarter stretch to lead Detroit to a 105-98 victory over Atlanta.

Grant Hill led the Pistons with 24 points and 11 assists, and Brian Williams added 23 points. Don Reid had four blocks, including two on Dikembe Mutombo's dunk attempts, for Detroit.

• **Heat 112, Trail Blazers 80:** In Miami, Mark Strickland scored a career-high 23 points off the bench on 11-of-14 shooting, including a couple of highlight-reel dunks, as Miami routed Portland.

Four of Miami's starters reached double figures, led by Alonzo Mourning's 22 points.

Tim Hardaway had 20 points and 13 assists, one off his season-high. Voshon Lenard added 15 points and Dan Majerle had 13.

The victory was the fourth in a row and the 21st in 25 games for the Heat, who swept the season series from Portland for the first time in franchise history.

• **Bulls 102, Raptors 100:** In Toronto, Michael Jordan hit a short jumper with 5.4 seconds left in regulation to give Chicago the victory. Jordan, who finished with 33 points, drove past Marcus Camby at the top of the key before pulling up for the game-winning shot after the Bulls had let a 12-point lead with six minutes left slip away.

The Raptors, who were out of timeouts, got the ball to Chauncey Billups, who heaved a desperation 3-pointer from near halfcourt that missed the rim and bounced out of bounds with one second left. Scottie Pippen also had 33 points and Dennis Rodman grabbed 18 rebounds for the Bulls (51-17), who moved a half-game ahead of Seattle and Utah in the battle for the best record leaguewide.

• **Celtics 108, 76ers 90:** In Boston, Dana Barros outplayed Allen Iverson, scoring 27 points, dishing out nine assists and grabbing nine rebounds to lead Boston over Philadelphia. Antoine Walker added 25 points and 10 rebounds for Boston, which snapped a season-high, six-game losing streak.

Ron Mercer had 24 points. Theo Ratliff paced the 76ers with 27 points and Iverson finished with 21 points and three assists.

• **Magic 92, Warriors 83:** In Orlando, Florida, Bo Outlaw had 22 points and seven rebounds and Derek Strong added 18 points and 12 rebounds off the bench as Orlando, despite playing without Nick Anderson, defeated Golden State.

It was the third victory in four games for Orlando, which is locked in a three-team race with New Jersey and Washington for the Eastern Conference's final playoff spot. The Magic and Wizards are currently tied for the spot, a half-game ahead of the Nets.

• **Pacers 96, Bucks 94, OT:** In Milwaukee, Reggie Miller scored 32 points and Rik Smits converted a key three-point play in overtime as Indiana defeated reeling Milwaukee.

Ray Allen led Milwaukee with 25 points and Michael Curry added a career-high 21, but the Bucks lost their ninth straight and their 12th in their last 13.

Mark Jackson scored 15 points and Smits had 15 points and seven rebounds as Indiana maintained its hold on the second-best record in the Eastern Conference.

• **Wizards 102, Nets 100, OT:** In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Chris Webber converted a go-ahead three-point play with 27.6 seconds left in overtime, then gave the Nets the choke sign as he walked off the court.

The victory not only moved the Wizards (35-33) ahead of New Jersey (35-34) and into a playoff position, but Washington also captured the season series 3-1, giving it the advantage if the teams finish the season tied.

Keith Van Horn almost single-handedly carried the Nets in the fourth quarter and the overtime, scoring 15 of their final 19 points. However, he turned the ball over on a traveling call with the Nets trailing 99-98 with 16.8 seconds left in overtime.

• **Spurs 93, Suns 83:** In San Antonio, Texas, Tim Duncan had 26 points and 21 rebounds, leading the San Antonio Spurs over the Phoenix Suns. David Robinson added 17 points and 16 rebounds for San Antonio, which had lost its previous three games to Phoenix this season.

Rex Chapman scored 30 points for the Suns. Antonio McDyess had 14 points and 10 rebounds. The Spurs trailed 44-42 at halftime, but used four 3-pointers by Chuck Person to outscore Phoenix 23-11 in the first 6:38 of the third quarter. Person finished with 14 points.

## First Division Basketball Championship Second round begins with easy matches for top 3

By Aileen Bannayan  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As the second round of the country's top basketball event starts Tuesday, the top teams — Al Jazireh, Orthodoxi and Ahli — face relatively easy opponents before their more crucial encounters begin mid-week.

Leaders Al Jazireh, who ended the first round with an unbeaten streak, face newcomers Al Jeel who defied expectations as they defeated Al Hussein and Al Jalil to take fourth place.

They only need one more win to secure their place in the First Division and seem closer to keeping their place in the prestigious group.

Al Jalil are more likely to avoid the relegation-threatened last place after scoring a first round 47-35 win over Al Hussein.

Al Jeel, who lost 83-54 to Al Jazireh in the first round, stand no real chance against the titleholders in the only match played in Amman.

Throughout the preliminary round, Al Jazireh displayed a fast attacking style in knocking out opponents including former champs Al Orthodoxi 92-84.

Their lineup is the most coherent, with impressive results during the West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers which they hosted last month.

Despite the rise of new stars like Yousef Abu Bakr, Husam Lutfi and Naser Alawneh, the team's scoring and overall performance is often hampered by the apparent inclination

of their centres to foul early in the match.

In Irbid, winless Al Hussein meet Al Ahli who are currently third after losing to Al Orthodoxi and Al Jazireh.

Al Ahli's last match against Al Jazireh, in which they lost 75-69 after a 36-33 halftime lead, gave their fans and officials some breathing space as their performance continued to improve. They still stand a competitive chance with the introduction of the playoff system this year.

Last year's second placed Al Ahli had won the first round encounter 83-60 and their match against Al Hussein will be a good chance for them to keep working on their physical conditioning while trying to find the right combination led by veteran Yousef Zaghoul.

Al Ahli were unimpressive throughout the first round and lost 74-49 to Al Orthodoxi.

However, Zaghoul and younger teammates Faisal Nsour and Mohammad Al Shamali showed an unrelenting determination to improve their image despite eventually losing to Al Jazireh.

Having had technical and manager-

ial obstacles for the past two seasons, Al Ahli also started training late and missed out on serious pre-season friendlies while looking for a coach.

The return of veterans Zaghoul and Marwan Ma'touq (nursing an injury) to the team has given their young incoherent lineup much needed confidence. This might be further boosted if and when veteran Naser Bushnaq joins the team.

In the third match of the day, last year's third placed Al Orthodoxi will meet Al Jalil in Irbid hoping to revise tactics before playing Al Ahli on March 28.

Al Orthodoxi won their first round encounter 87-42 and their young lineup of rising stars Fadi Saqa, Nasser Bassam and Ayman Du'eis will probably have no problem in scoring a comfortable win.

Al Jazireh's win last year ended a 30-year domination by rivals Orthodoxi and Al Ahli.

Al Orthodoxi had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989, but Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 aided by the signing of Bushnaq.

Al Orthodoxi came back to win in 1991, 1995 and 1996.

### Standings before second round

| Team      | P | W | L | St  | Sa  | Pts |
|-----------|---|---|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Jazireh   | 5 | 5 | - | 429 | 309 | 10  |
| Orthodoxi | 5 | 4 | 1 | 436 | 293 | 9   |
| Ahli      | 5 | 3 | 2 | 351 | 320 | 8   |
| Jeel      | 5 | 2 | 3 | 304 | 398 | 7   |
| Jalil     | 5 | 1 | 4 | 260 | 346 | 6   |
| Hussein   | 5 | - | 5 | 261 | 375 | 5   |

## Bayern win at last

BONN (AFP) — Bayern Munich finally broke their dry spell Sunday evening with a 3-0 Bundesliga victory away to VfB Stuttgart.

The triumph shored up their second place on the table behind Kaiserslautern.

Bayern, who went into the match without a goal for 545 minutes, again saw their strikers struggle.

Midfielders Thorsten Fink and Mehmet Scholl set up the win with goals in the 21st and 40th minutes respectively.

Substitute Alexander Zickler drove the nail deeper with a fine solo run down the right, drilling the ball home in the 78th minute with his first touch of the evening.

German national team coach Berti Vogts and the national squad watched the game from the stands.

Half a dozen of those on the field will join the national squad Wednesday for a friendly match against world champions Brazil, also in Stuttgart's Neckar stadium.

Bayern's win took them to 51 points in the Bundesliga, six behind Kaiserslautern, who also have a game in hand.

## Inter win 3-0, close on Juventus

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan staked their claim to the Italian championship here on Sunday night, when they trounced AC Milan 3-0 in the derby to close within one point of leaders Juventus.

Juventus, held 2-2 at Parma, now have 54 points while Lazio are in third spot two points off the pace after a 0-0 draw at Piacenza.

Argentine Diego Simeone was Inter's two-goal hero at San Siro, although arguably the killer blow, Inter's second goal in the 76th minute, was delivered by Ronaldo.

It was the Brazilian's 17th goal of the season. A packed crowd of 80,000 watched as Inter's individual skills eventually proved too much for AC Milan, who were later branded "amateurs" by furious coach Fabio Capello.

Simeone was allowed to head in Youri Djorkaeff's 41st minute corner. Ronaldo scored on a classic Inter counter-attack in the 76th minute, but it was Simeone's second which made Capello's blood boil.

Milan pushed so far forward in search of a goal that no-one was left inside their own half, allowing the Argentine to take possession from his own semi-circle and steam through unchallenged to beat Sebastiano Rossi.

"It's been the story of our season. We're just gifting goals away," Capello lamented.

"The first half was fairly evenly balanced, and we probably even tried more than they did. But in the second half the balance

started to shift and they took full advantage.

"What I don't accept, though, is that a player can score a goal after starting in his own half. That's what happens to teams in amateur football. And AC Milan cannot play like amateurs."

Inter's league form is improving at a time when Juventus' is beginning to look suspect after three consecutive draws.

Filippo Inzaghi, whose midweek hat-trick put Juventus into the Champions League semi-finals, notched a crucial equaliser as Juventus rallied from two goals down to earn a point earlier in the day.

Parma's Mario Stanic rose to head home a 35th minute free-kick from Enrico Chiesa, and five minutes later Massimo Crippa nodded in Chiesa's corner to give the home side a commanding lead.

However, substitute Alessio Tacchinardi pulled one back for Juventus in the 54th minute, when Parma keeper Gianluigi Buffon blocked but failed to hold the ball as Inzaghi closed in for the kill.

And Inzaghi made it 2-2 just five minutes later, rattling home a left-foot shot to round off a memorable week for the World Cup hopefuls.

The turning point was a pep talk from Juventus coach Marcello Lippi at the break of his 200th match in charge of the Turin club.

"At half-time, I told the players it happens every Sunday, in every league in the world, from the lowest

amateurs to the Serie A, for a team to be 2-0 down at the break and to finish up with a draw.

"For that reason, I told them, they have to try. If they hadn't managed it, we'd just have to have thought about the next match," he said.

Parma coach Carlo Ancelotti said: "I'd have thought it was obvious to my players that despite being 2-0 in front, they had to make sure they didn't ease up, or give Juventus even a yard of extra space."

"Because if you give anything away to the big sides they always punish you for it; and that's what happened. We probably took it easy a bit in the first 15 minutes of the second half and Juventus punished us."

Udinese stayed fourth in the table but closed on the top sides after beating Brescia 3-1. Udinese's German ace Oliver Bierhoff headed his 19th league goal of the season, extending his lead in the scorers' charts.

Florentina drew 1-1 with Bologna with both goals coming from penalties. Brazilian-turned Belgian Luis Oliveira converted the first in the 36th minute and Roberto Baggio equalised for Bologna three minutes later AS Roma finished 1-1 with Vicenza.

while Sampdoria ended a run of five consecutive defeats by beating struggling Bari 1-0.

Down at the bottom of the table, Napoli rallied from 2-0 down to 2-2 with Lecce, only to lose 4-2, while fellow strugglers Atalanta beat Empoli 1-0.

## 2 Jordanian kids to be part of World Cup action

IN THE DREAM of a lifetime, local youths will get the chance to come as close to a World Cup as it gets — short of actually being players themselves — thanks to an official Coca-Cola "Ball Kids" programme announced today.

More than 500 young people from around the world, including two from Jordan, will be selected by Coca-Cola to be on the official matches of the 1998 World Cup, the greatest footballing event ever, being staged from 10 June to 12 July in 10 cities across France.

The tournament will feature 32 teams playing before approximately 2.5 million spectators and a cumulative television audience expected to exceed 3.7 billion.

Applicants should be between 11 and 16 years old and be fit. A

draw will be held to announce the winners by April 15.

Application forms are available in newspapers, many schools and major shopping outlets.

The Ball Kids will wear official World Cup uniforms and be responsible for receiving and returning footballs that go out of bounds during the match. They will be under the direction of the official referee of the match.

The Coca-Cola Company has been a major sponsor of each World Cup since 1978.

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## U.N. officials open talks on inspections of palaces

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.N. officials held talks with Iraq's deputy prime minister Monday about searching President Saddam Hussein's presidential compounds for weapons of mass destruction.

Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler opened talks with Tariq Aziz after the Iraqi official met with Prakash Shah, the special envoy of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Mr. Aziz negotiated and signed the agreement with Mr. Annan last month that opened the way for the palace inspections and averted a threatened U.S. attack on Iraq.

His meetings with Mr. Butler are expected to work out procedures for the U.N. arms inspectors to enter the palaces, which Iraq had earlier declared off-limits to inspections, calling them symbols of Iraq's sovereignty.

Also Monday, the 250-member Iraqi parliament unanimously approved a resolution branding U.S. President Bill Clinton, his predecessor George Bush and other U.S. officials as war criminals for "their perpetration of immoral and inhumane crimes against the Iraqi people," the official Iraqi News Agency said.

The resolution urged the international community "to take necessary measures to indict" the American leaders, the agency said. The action is in response to a U.S. Senate resolution urging that President Saddam be tried as a war criminal.

Iraq has repeatedly blamed the United States for keeping crippling U.N. sanctions on the country. The sanctions, imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, cannot be lifted until U.N. arms inspectors

### Turkey offers two observers to U.N.

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey has offered the services of two diplomats to observe inspections of presidential sites in Iraq under a U.N. accord with Baghdad, foreign ministry spokesman Necati Utkan said Monday.

"The Turkish ambassador to Baghdad, Engin Turker, and the counsellor at the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, Ahmet Melih Ulueren, have been nominated by Turkey following a request from the United Nations, Mr. Utkan told reporters.

"They will be observers in a special group set up to determine whether Iraq has weapons of mass destruction," he added.

The Feb. 23 accord defused a crisis which could have triggered a military confrontation between Iraq and the United States. Under the accord, U.N. weapons inspectors and International Atomic Energy Agency experts, accompanied by diplomats, are to inspect eight presidential sites which had previously been closed to U.N. inspectors.

"Turkey hopes the inspections can go ahead without incident and will open the way for a lifting of international sanctions against Iraq," Kassem Utkan said.

declare Iraq has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction.

In the latest crisis, the United States and Britain had threatened to use military force against Iraq unless it agreed to give the weapons inspectors unfettered access to all sites.

The two countries, which built up forces in the Gulf region in anticipation of punitive strikes on Iraq, have kept them in place pending inspections of the presidential palaces.

Mr. Butler said after arriving Sunday in Baghdad that the searches probably would start before the end of the month.

A frequent critic of Iraq in the past, Mr. Butler said he saw "a sense of new spirit now prevailing in our relationship. The degree of cooperation Iraq has been showing... is very high and very welcome." This is the first visit by Mr. Butler to Iraq since the Feb. 23 agreement accepted visits by his arms inspectors, who will be accompanied by teams of diplomats whose presence is intended to

protect Iraq's sovereignty.

Mr. Butler will stay in Baghdad for five days to discuss with Mr. Aziz the procedure for inspecting the sites, which occupy an area of 31.5 square kilometres and comprise 1,058 buildings.

Mr. Shah, the Indian diplomat who is Annan's representative, has said he expects to stay six months in Iraq. He will serve as a liaison between Iraq and the secretary-general.

Iraq, meanwhile, announced it will hold a graduation ceremony for citizens given military training on light weapons to defend the country in case of a strike by the Americans and British.

A presidential order Sunday said each graduate will be given a certificate at a ceremony expected on President Saddam's birthday, April 28.

Iraqi officials said up to two million citizens took the training and that the best of these will be chosen for a new reserve force, but the exact nature of the force is unclear.



Renee Forster surveys the remains of her mobile home which was demolished when it was blown off its foundation in the tornado that swept through Northern Georgia. Her trailer was located in an area across the street from North Hall High School where five people died. Workers and residents began cleaning up on Saturday in the wake of the tornado that killed 14 people and caused more than \$13.5 million in damage (Reuters photo)

## Upon his return from sick leave Yeltsin fires entire cabinet

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin sacked his entire government Monday barely minutes after returning to the Kremlin from his sick bed, insisting that Russia's economic reform programme needed fresh impetus.

In a dramatic move which took analysts by surprise and sent markets plummeting, Mr. Yeltsin dismissed Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and the rest of the cabinet and pledged to appoint a strong new executive to breathe new energy into the running of the country.

"The Russian Federation government is hereby dismissed," the president said in his decree carried by Interfax, adding that ministers would continue in their roles until a new cabinet is formed.

But the Russian president, who has made a habit of bold political initiatives after returning to the Kremlin from illness, quickly stressed that the move did not mean an end to reform but was rather intended to bolster and revitalise his team's economic policies.

Mr. Chernomyrdin was awarded an order "For Services to the Fatherland" in recognition of his five-year stint as head of the government. Mr. Yeltsin later said in an address on Russian televi-

sion that Mr. Chernomyrdin would now concentrate on preparations for presidential elections due in 2000.

"For us the 2000 elections are very important. One can say that this is the future destiny of Russia," Mr. Yeltsin said.

In a key sign that the Russian president remains committed to the path of market-oriented reform, Mr. Yeltsin appointed leading reformer Sergei Kiriyenko as acting prime minister.

And in the television address explaining his shake-up, Mr. Yeltsin insisted it would benefit, not hinder, reforms.

"The dismissal of the government does not mean that the course of our economic policy will change," Mr. Yeltsin said. "It's a move to give our economic reforms more energy and efficiency."

"People do not feel any improvements, the government has in recent times clearly lacked dynamism, initiative and a new look," the head of state said.

Russian Presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky said a new government would be formed before Mr. Yeltsin departs for Japan on April 11.

"I categorically reject the interpretation that this is a political crisis. This is all part of a normal political process. We must correct reforms, and we need people who can carry out a correction to reforms."

The markets took heart from Mr. Yeltsin's comments and expressions of business-as-usual from senior aides, with stocks arresting an initial free-fall slide on the news to trade some 3.5 per cent off opening levels at 12:30 p.m. local time.

"It's pretty disorganised out there but the market has bounced a bit from early lows and buyers are emerging to steady the market a little," said Brunswick's Gary Kinsey.

A separate decree was issued announcing the dismissals of Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais — seen as a key reform figure by foreign investors — and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov.

Mr. Kulikov's interim successor was named as Pavel Maslov, 51, a general who was deputy commander of Russian forces in Chechnya during the failed 21-month attempt to put down a secessionist drive.

Outgoing Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov for his part said foreign policy would not be affected by the shake-up.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree was published shortly after the president returned to the Kremlin after spending last week recuperating from an acute chest infection and cough.

The president has made a habit of reasserting his authority after lengthy absences from the Kremlin due to ill health.

In March last year, Mr. Yeltsin announced a new reform drive shortly after returning to the political stage after a long absence due to pneumonia.

Alexei Venediktov, chief editor of Echo Moscow Radio, said the move by Mr. Yeltsin could be aimed at forcing early parliamentary elections by foisting on the state Duma a new premier, whom deputies would object to.

"It's a huge shake-up and I think that it is a step towards early state Duma elections," Mr. Venediktov said, referring to the vote not due until December 1999.

"This move benefits Yeltsin, and Yeltsin alone," he added. "He is still the referee and he shows that even while ill he can take a very important decision and he shows that he is ready to run the country until presidential elections and maybe even further."

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## Yemeni secessionists get death sentences, jail terms

SANAA (AP) — Five south Yemeni secessionists were condemned to death in absentia here Monday at the end of a treason trial arising from the 1994 civil war.

Foremost among those who would face the death penalty should they return from exile are former Vice President Ali Salem Al Beidh, former Prime Minister Haidar Al Attas, and the former governor of the southern city of Aden — which served as a capital for the secessionists — Saleh Munassar Al Siyalli.

The court convicted 13 men of treason and war

crimes, handing down sentences ranging from three years to death, and found two others innocent.

The case arose from the May 1994 rebellion when southern Yemenis, led by Mr. Al Beidh, tried to break the 1990 agreement that had united the formerly Marxist-ruled South Yemen with the conservative, tribally-based north Yemen.

Yemeni opposition groups here and abroad condemned the trial, which lasted almost two years, saying the government should rather have sought to encourage reconciliation.

The court sentenced the

head of the current exiled Yemeni opposition, Abdul Rahman Al Jifri, to a suspended jail term of 10 years.

The others condemned to death were former Defence Minister Haidar Qassem Taher and the former Labour Party official Saleh Obaid Ahmad.

After the short war, President Ali Abdullah Saleh proclaimed an amnesty for the rebels, but excluded those convicted Monday who were regarded as leaders of the insurrection. They now live in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Britain and Egypt.

## Three Italians to face trial over pro-Kurdish action

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — Three Italians were scheduled to appear before the state security court here Monday to face possible charges of instigation to violence, prefect Nafiz Kayali said.

Police detained the three Saturday as they took part in Newroz celebrations marking the Kurdish new year.

"A group of Italians including MPs and journalists chanted slogans in favour of the separatist organisation and tried to provoke the people," Mr. Kayali said.

The separatist organisation he referred to was the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

"We cannot allow public security to be disturbed and that fact that a person is an MP in no way gives him the right to instigate the people," the prefect said.

The state security court prosecutor is to rule on whether the three should be committed for trial on charges of instigation to violence. They risk a three-year prison sentence.

The three, part of a larger

group of European pacifists and MPs, were arrested as police forcibly broke up a demonstration by about 10,000 people who were chanting anti-government slogans.

At least 12 protesters were injured.

The PKK has been in armed rebellion against Ankara since 1984 and seeks to set up an independent Kurdish state in the area on the border with Syria, Iraq and Iran.

At least 20,000 people have died in clashes since that time.

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ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, bowing to pressure from the country's generals, on Monday announced a series of measures to be taken against Islamists.

"The government has the necessary determination to fight the fundamentalism that is aiming to topple the secular regime of the country," Mr. Yilmaz told journalists.

The move came three days after top army generals issued Mr. Yilmaz a tough warning, accusing the cabinet of "inefficiency" in fighting Islamism.

Demonstration laws are to be tightened, and stiffer penalties imposed on violations of the dress code for public office, Mr. Yilmaz said.

The construction of new mosques will be subject to authorisation from the Department of Religious Affairs, a state-run agency reporting to the prime minister, he added.

New legislation is to be adopted to control the activities of organisations, foundations, schools and other institutions suspected of supporting or financing Islamists in Turkey, Mr. Yilmaz said.

"Legal preparations to control the financial resources of these institutions have been made," he said.

"Preparations are also underway for a law to curb fundamentalist and subversive broadcasts on private radio and television stations," he added.

Policemen involved in fundamentalist activities will be fired, a policy which has been pursued in the army for years. The sale of pump-action guns is to be restricted and subject to arms licences. A report prepared by the army last year had pointed out a considerable rise in the sale of pump-action guns, which was attributed to fundamentalists.

Finally, the state monopoly on collec-

tion of the skins of sheep slaughtered for the Muslim feast of sacrifice is to be strictly enforced, Mr. Yilmaz said. The skins, re-sold for millions of dollars each year, are strongly coveted by religious organisations.

"We think the struggle against religious extremism should be conducted in cooperation with all institutions of the state in the framework of the democratic principles of the rule of law and we deem the support of parliament and all other institutions to be necessary in this struggle," Mr. Yilmaz said.

The government will take charge of coordinating the various institutions, Mr. Yilmaz said. "A special commission charged with supervision and coordination of these measures has been formed at the prime ministry," he added.

Similar commissions had been formed at provincial and regional levels, he said.

Earlier this year the censorship authorities seized two books published by Abdul Kerim on the recommendation of Al Azhar, the mosque-university which acts as authority on Sunni Islam.

Al Azhar charged that the 68-year-old author expressed "contempt for religion" in two books relating to aspects of everyday life during the times of the Prophet Mohammad.

Mr. Kassem said the interview was one of several items in the banned edition which were considered offending by the censorship authorities, including a review of a translation of a book by Ibrahim Abdul Meguid.

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian authorities banned the latest edition of the fortnightly magazine Cairo Times because it interviewed an author who had books censored on religious grounds, publisher Hisham Kassem said Monday.

On Saturday I was informed that the paper would not be distributed because of an interview conducted with Khalil Abdul Kerim," Mr. Kassem told AFP.

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